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TALES OF INDIAN ROMANCE—BY ALIF.

Nur Jehan.

CHAPTER III.

When Mirza Ghaias dismounted from his horse at his own door, he found it, as usual, beset with a crowd of applicants for justice. His heart however was ill at ease. He was wearied with the long durbar and the subsequent interview with the Emperor, and most disinclined to enter upon business at that hour of the day. He therefore dismissed the attendants in his court, and desired information to be given outside that it would be open for the administration of justice at the usual hour the next day. This done, he repaired to his private office, and summoned his Secretary to read the reports of the day.

He seemed to take no particular interest in the matters that were read to him one after the other, but issued the necessary orders in each case as briefly as possible. As soon as this was done, he desired Muhammed Husain to be summoned. The Police officer presented himself in obedience to the command.

"Well, Muhammed," said Mirza Ghaias, addressing the officer, "didst thou discover any thing last night?"

"Nothing, my lord," replied the other. "I was well concealed, and am confident the Fakir had no suspicion of his actions being watched."

"Didst thou remain there all night?"

"All night, my lord."

"And nothing whatever occurred?"

"Nothing worthy of note, my lord: once a traveller stopped to get a little water; the Fakir gave it him, and he went on."

"How did the Fakir pass the night?"

"He remained inside his hut, my lord, the whole night, except once, when he came out to give the traveller water."

"Didst thou see him eat or drink?"

"No, my lord."

"Was there a light in the hut at any time during the night, or a fire?"

"No, neither."

"It is strange," muttered Mirza Ghaias to himself, "strange indeed. I must try again." Then he continued speaking aloud to the officer before him. "Listen, Muhammed. To-night I will watch myself; let the same number of men be ready as thou hadst last night, and take them with thee to the spot I pointed out. Yet go not from hence till the night has well set in, and when ye go, go quietly. I shall go alone. Take no thought of me, unless ye hear my voice or the sound of my horn blowing—now go."

After the officer was gone, Mirza Ghaias remained writing in his office till it was nearly dark, when he suddenly arose and bent his steps towards the ladies' apartments.

"Ha, all alone, my love," he said, addressing an elderly lady, who was reclining listlessly upon her cushion; "is Nur Jehan still at the palace there?"

"Yes, my lord, the maiden has not returned yet."

"It is late; it is time she were home—is it not?"

"Oh, I feel no anxiety about her—sometimes indeed she remains all night there—when the ladies have a dance or a grand show, it is so late before it is over that it is better for her to remain there than come home—but, my lord, you look troubled this evening. Can I not cheer your spirits as I was wont to do in byegone days. We have gone through many vicissitudes of life together, and our hair has grown gray under them, but now we have naught to sorrow for."

"Yes, my love; indeed you could cheer me did I need cheering. I am always delighted to get away from my office, and forget the cares of state while I listen to your voice; but to-night I have work on hand, and must not be idle. I have ordered my horse, and came here to sup with you before I go out."

"What, must you go out again, my lord—an adventure?"

"Yes, perhaps an adventure. No, there is no need of making mysteries with you, the partner of all my sorrows and my joys. You know I have long been anxious to find out a clue to this band of robbers that I am satisfied exists in and about Delhi, and further, too, and I have an unaccountable feeling in my mind, a persuasion I may say, that that old Fakir, who is so famous for his sanctity and wisdom, is not what he seems. I am sure there is some mystery about him: indeed every one acknowledges that, and I am determined, if I can, to unravel it. I do not know that he is anything else than a recluse, but I suspect, I fancy, I almost think he is—"

"But why, my lord, should you take such a task in your own hands: are not your officers expert and numerous too?"

"Yes, yes; but they do not satisfy me. Yet do not question me further, my love. Do you recollect that day, that eventful day, when Nur Jehan was born, when I said I must take the

child and place it where I did. I could not tell you why I did so. I felt I must do it: an unseen power bade me do it. I obeyed the impulse, and what was the consequence, we are living in a palace instead of a beggar's hovel, and our lovely daughter is the companion of princesses, instead of being...... bah! I know not what. It is the same thing now. I must go and watch this old Fakir to-night. Come let us sup."

"Shall you go alone, my lord?" asked the lady anxiously, as they began the evening meal.

"Yes, but I shall have a guard within call. I have well marked the place. I rode by there as if accidentally yesterday, and stopped at the place to get some water, and took the opportunity to look about me well. There is a tree close by, which I intend to climb up, and so conceal myself."

Their conversation was continued a short time longer, when Mirza Ghaias arose, and taking leave of his wife for the night, descended to his own apartments, where he prepared for the expedition by changing his clothes and arming himself. This done, he hurried to the door, and was soon riding at full speed through the now deserted streets. The night was one well calculated to favor his enterprize, for it was pitch dark. There was an appearance too of an approaching storm, for the air was still, except at times, when sudden gusts of wind swept through the air, carrying with it a light cloud of sand: the reflected, or as it is called in England, summer lightning too was plainly visible at intervals, but no thunder was yet audible; there was a storm somewhere, it was evident, but in what quarter of the heavens it was raging was not so certain.

Mirza Ghaias, as soon as he cleared the streets of Delhi, and heard the city gate shut behind him, set spurs to his horse and went off at a sharp gallop. He knew every inch of the road, and the unusual darkness of the night seemed to cause him little anxiety. He now and then cast his eyes up to the sky as the gusts of wind passed by him, to see if the storm were really begun, but he drew not his rein, nor slackened his horse's speed, till he was four miles from Delhi. He had taken the same road which the Prince Selim had pursued the day before, and halted almost at the same spot where the Prince had alighted to put on his disguise. Here he found one of his attendants waiting. He dismounted in silence, gave the horse to the servant who, without speaking a word, led it back in the direction of the city, and Mirza Ghaias pursued his way alone, and on foot. He soon however turned out of the high road, and bent his steps towards the open country on the left hand. After advancing cautiously for about half a mile, he came to a corn-field surrounded by a low hedge. This he skirted, keeping it on his left hand. About a hundred yards further on he came upon Muhammed Husain, who lay with a few men concealed in the corner of the field. Mirza Ghaias whispered a few words in the ear of his lieutenant and then passed on. He continued to advance in this stealthy manner till he had fairly passed the grove of trees under which the Fakir Pir Ibrahim dwelt, to his right hand; he then turned and directed his

course so as to enter the grove on the side furthest from the city. Here his movements were conducted with the utmost caution. He trod slowly and carefully, and waited a second after each step to listen whether his approach had been discovered by any one, or whether his footstep on the turf had awakened any sound by crushing the few dried leaves and twigs that had fallen on the grass. All was as silent as the grave. A light however was burning at the shrine, and another in the Fakir's hut, and the flickering and faint glare from the oil lamps that fell upon the ground and lighted up the spot for a short distance round, made the darkness beyond seem more intense. He passed the shrine at the distance of a few yards from the outer wall, and paused to look in through the open door. The gaunt figure of the Fakir was plainly observable in the light of the little lamp. He was kneeling, and seemed engaged in prayer. Mirza Ghaias passed cautiously on, and paused again at the door of the little hut. It was empty, but on the ground before the entrance a small carpet was spread, and close by it a tray had been placed, in which some fruits and sweetmeats and an earthen cup were standing. Mirza Ghaias made a hasty survey of the small apartment, and then turned to put his first project into execution, of climbing a tree and watching the Fakir's movements from thence. The tree he had marked out was one which grew immediately behind the hut, and whose knotted stump and wide over-spreading branches afforded every facility for the object the Mirza had in view. He succeeded in raising himself to the lowest of the large branches, and taking up his position there in silence, but he had not settled himself many minutes before a noise was heard in the direction of the shrine, and the figure of the Fakir appeared immediately afterwards at the door.

Mirza Ghaias strained his eyes to watch as narrowly as the darkness of the night would allow him, the movements of the suspected man, but what was his surprize when he saw him come straight towards the tree where he had concealed himself, and looking up said,—

"Noble Mirza Ghaias, wilt thou not descend and partake of some refreshment after thy journey. I expected thy arrival, and have done what my small means allowed, to give thee hearty welcome."

Mirza Ghaias had no chicken heart; he had confronted danger and death too often to know what fear was; but the shock of surprize at finding his movements, though they had been guarded with the utmost secrecy and caution, thus known and calculated on by the mysterious character on the ground before him, was so great, that he felt his heart beat audibly, and indeed was near losing his hold and falling precipitately to the ground. His mind, however, was well accustomed to act speedily and calmly in the midst of danger, and the first shock of surprize was no sooner over, than the feeling of astonishment was dispelled by the suspicion of treachery. His plans had been revealed by his own subordinates—what further mystery, or what cause of surprise was there. The next feeling that took possession of his mind was annoyance at having his plans

thwarted, mingled with considerable vexation at being placed in such an undignified and ridiculous position by the untimely discovery of the Fakir. There was no help for it however. It was useless making any further attempt at concealment, and out of the question endeavouring to prosecute further his original intention. So the Mirza did as many a man had done before him, and many a one has done since, and yielding to the force of circumstances, descended from the tree with the best grace he could.

"A thousand gold pieces for thee, old man, if thou wilt tell me who has played the traitor; who old thee of my coming, for it is useless making a mystery of the matter? I am Mirza Ghaias."

"Offer not thy perishing and worthless gold, proud son of Adam, to one whose heart is set on heaven. No mortal man betrayed thee."

"Pshaw! a truce to thy sermons!" replied Mirza Ghaias warmly. "I have been betrayed, and I will have the life of him that did it."

"Speak not thus impiously, vain man, in the presence of Alla, and so near the resting place of his favoured saint—may he rest in peace—and spill not human blood thus mercilessly. Mark, how the thunderbolt of Alla's vengeance speeds through the murky air; and beware, impious man, lest he bid the avenging Angel strike thy rebellious head. Thou hast wronged me, proud minister of a mighty Emperor—thou hast wronged me in thy mind, by entertaining thy foul suspicions of my character. How didst thou find me employed? Didst thou come upon me in the midst of revel and debauchery? Didst thou see me counting out heaps of gold or surveying with the eye of avarice hidden treasures? Or didst thou find me engaged in devotion and in commune with the beings of another world? Yet come, it is none of my faith to repay evil with evil, suspicion with suspicion. Thou art doubtless wearied with thy journey, fruitless as it has been, and I have had a repast prepared for thee—wilt thou partake of it?"

"Keep thy accursed victuals to thyself. I want them not."

"Thou speakest hastily; but didst thou know, proud man, what I could tell thee of thy fate and fortune, thou wouldst kiss the dust in gratitude."

"I have offered thee a thousand pieces of gold for thy secret, and thou wilt not sell it."

"I sell nothing for such worthless lucre—nor could I if I would, for no mortal man forewarned me of thy approach; it was revealed to me from heaven."

The mind of Mirza Ghaias was a strange compound of superstition and common sense. He had far more of the latter than most men of his age and station. Nature had blessed him with an unusual amount of sagacity and prudence, which had been fostered and improved by a life spent amid the vicissitudes of fortune, intrigue, and danger; he had a thorough knowledge of human nature, and was rarely wrong in his opinion and estimation of men's characters. Yet with all this he was superstitious to an extraordinary degree; a firm believer, as most if not all men at that time were, in the influence of the heavenly bodies upon the affairs of this lower world, he had studied the science of Astrolo-

gy with the greatest perseverance ever since he had arrived at years of maturity. He had none of the scepticism that characterized the Emperor his master, and though a far more bigoted Mussulman, was perhaps a less honest man than Akber, and to his bigotry and religious enthusiasm was added a firm belief in the science of alchemy, sorcery, and magic, and a complete subservience to all the current superstitions of his day. Yet inclined as he would naturally have been to look upon Pir Ibrahim's character with awe and reverence, he could never divest his mind of the idea that he was not only an impostor, but something worse; he had a presentiment that there was some concealment and disguise about the man, a presentiment that had been considerably strengthened by one or two suspicious facts that had been brought to light during the investigations he had recently been making up the secret system of crime that he was conscious existed in the country, and which probably, (though he himself was unaware of it,) had been given birth to by the peculiar talent he possessed of forming a judgment of men's characters from the expression of their features, of connecting in his active mind ideas and associations however distant, with suspicions or facts of a suspicious nature.

"Was the colour of the horse I rode on revealed to thee?" asked Mirza, willing to test the other's claim to revelation.

"It was not revealed to me, but I know it. Why should I seek to shew the favours of heaven to mortal men. I ask thee not to put faith in me or mine. I asked thee to partake of my simple fare, but I have a mission to thee, Mirza. I have a secret to tell thee; it concerns thy daughter."

"Ha!" said Mirza Ghaias hurriedly, "beware how thou speakest of her; what wouldst thou say of Nur Jehan?"

"I could say that that would make thy ears tingle, but thou believest me not. I must give thee proof, and Alla pardon me if I do wrong. What thought crossed thy mind this night when thou didst enter thy wife's apartment, and thy daughter had not returned from the palace?"

Mirza Ghaias was silent; had there been light there, the Fakir would have seen how the colour rose to his face, and his lips quivered with ill-concealed emotion.

"Have I seen thy daughter, the famous beauty, Nur Jehan? Who gave her that ring that sparkles on her finger? Is the light of those two diamonds as bright as the glance of her eye? Or are those two rubies as red as her rosy lips? How came the second ruby to be cracked?"

Mirza Ghaias recollected the cracked ruby well. The ring had accidentally fallen from his daughter's hand when she was at the palace, into the court-yard below the ladies' apartments. Prince Selim had picked it up; the ruby was cracked, but she had refused to have it replaced by another.

"Doubtless thou knowest secrets, old man, and much I marvel that thy knowledge is so great; if thou hast aught to tell me that concerns my fate, speak out; thou shalt be rewarded," said the Mirza, now convinced that whatever Pir Ibrahim might be, he knew a great deal more than he had given

him credit for. Still the idea that he was any thing but a saint only became impressed more strongly than ever on his mind.

"Time speeds," replied the Fakir, speaking after a short pause. "Wilt thou swear to me on the holy book that thou wilt cease to persecute me? That thou wilt not molest me, until it is proved to thee by plain evidence that I have been guilty of transgressing either the laws of God or man?"

"Why should I swear? Do we punish the innocent?"

"By the Prophet, thou canst molest the innocent, though it is not called punishment. Take that oath; on no other condition will I reveal to thee what I know."

"I will swear to that," replied Mirza Ghaias. "I injure not the innocent."

"But thou canst suspect—I shall be watched by thee or thy myrmidons night and day; my devotions will be interrupted; my meditations disturbed; and, hark! proud Mirza, my secret is such, that I could at any moment destroy thee by it. Yes, destroy thee—thy life, at any rate thy fortunes are in my hands. If thou wilt swear never to molest me, never to injure me, never to watch me, unless I am proved to thee a criminal, I will swear never to use my secret to thy injury, but will give it thee to make thy fortune by: and thou shalt see men bow down to thee thy slaves, thy friends shall triumph, and thy enemies tremble: wilt thou swear?"

"Ay, I will swear, and as long as thou keepest thine oath, I will keep mine."

"It is well," replied the Fakir, retiring into his hut, and emerging from it immediately afterwards with a Koran in his hands. Mirza Ghaias took the book from him and repeated the oath required, as the other dictated.

The Fakir then took the book from his hands and swore that he would never use what he was about to reveal to the injury of the minister.

"Now speak," said Mirza Ghaias, unable to repress his curiosity, yet anxious to make it appear that he was indifferent to the Fakir's promises or threats.

"It is this, Mirza," replied the Fakir, speaking slowly. "The arrow of love has pierced the heart of the future Emperor of the Moguls, and he sighs to be the slave of Nur Jehan."

Mirza Ghaias pressed his hand against his heart as if to stay its violent palpitation; for an instant he lost the power of speech as the golden visions of ambition crowded on his mental sight. At length he asked the Fakir to reveal the source whence he derived his knowledge.

"The Prince came to me in disguise and disclosed it all. He asked advice, and purchased a charm from me. He does not love, he worships, he adores, his passion can brook no obstacle. Now farewell! and recollect thine oath." With these words the Fakir turned and entered his hut.

Mirza Ghaias soon joined his men, but he uttered not a word to any of them. He heeded not the torrents of rain that had begun to fall, nor the deafening peals of thunder that rolled in quick succession from the dense mass of clouds that filled the air, nor noticed the forked lightning that darted like a stream of liquid fire from the heaven to the earth;

he paid no attention to his lieutenant's advice to get under shelter till the fury of the storm was abated, but walked on through the pattering rain, and over the miry ground, till he reached the place where his attendant stood with his horse, some hundred yards from the spot where he had dismounted. He took the reins from his servant in silence, sprang into the saddle, and set off, as fast as his drenched and terrified steed could carry him, to Dehli.

CHAPTER IV.

THE dwelling or palace of Mirza Ghaias was surrounded by a spacious garden, a great part of which was allotted to the ladies of the family, and preserved from intrusion or even the glance of a stranger's eye, by a high brick wall that ran round the whole enclosure. The greatest care was taken to render this secluded spot worthy of its fair visitors, and Mirza Ghaias spared neither trouble or expense in providing for the happiness, and gratifying even the slightest wish of his wife and favourite daughter. The character of the latter had nothing in common with that of her companions and associates, and the seclusion which the imperative law of custom imposed upon Indian ladies was in the last degree irksome and distasteful to a mind like Nur Jehan's, which seems to have been filled almost from her earliest infancy, with ambition, hopes, and a certain degree of romantic love of excitement and adventure. Indeed the great charms of her beauty consisted in the expression rather than the form of her features; instead of the half shut eye and languishing look so much admired in the East, her eyes sparkled with intelligence, and the activity of her mental powers was as plainly reflected in the constantly changing expression of her face, as her features in a mirror. There may have been greater beauties to be found among the ladies that attended on the Empress Sultana, but there were none who could compete with Nur Jehan in elegance, and the winning grace of her countless charms.

In the centre of the garden allotted to the use of the ladies in Mirza Ghaias's household stood a marble reservoir, filled with the clearest water: a number of artificial fountains, so common in Eastern gardens, threw up constant streams of water, that fell again in ten thousand times ten thousand little sparkling drops into the reservoir, with a sound as melodious to the ear as the strains of music. The gold and silver fish darted to and fro the livelong day in the crystal-like transparent stream; their scales and fins glistening in the sunny light, and seeming, with their elegant forms and graceful movements, like the children of the fountains. A narrow pathway, paved with marble, led from the edge to the centre of the reservoir, where a summer-house had been built also of marble, and it was here, under its cool recess, that the ladies used to pass most of their time in the long hot summer days, reclining on soft carpets, surrounded by the fountains that played incessantly, and amused the ear, or lulled the

senses with their never-ceasing splash, while they cooled the sultry air. The noisy hum from the crowded streets of the city has at length subsided; the tradesmen's shops are closed for the night, and except in one or two houses, where a stream of light makes its way through the chinks in the doors, showing that the inmates are still up, poring over their account books, or playing at the forbidden game of dice, all is gloom and darkness. Silence too reigns throughout the dwelling of Mirza Ghaias; the master of the house is absent, but that is known only to his wife. Nur Jehan has been all day at the Emperor's palace, and only returned when the shades of evening were gathering over the sky.

She alone of the whole household sleeps not. She has long parted from her mother for the night, and dismissed her own attendants to their slumbers, and now she sits, or rather reclines by the open window, (for it is safe to open the window at night, when the rude gaze of the stranger cannot penetrate the sanctum, ah, safe indeed!) inhaling the cool fresh air that wafted over the orange groves beneath her lattice comes laden with the sweetest odours. And what dreams of happiness or visions of ambition float through her mind, as she sits with her beautiful gazelle-like eyes fixed on the starry heavens.

All around is silent as the tomb itself, and the stillness of the night is only broken in upon by the uninterrupting splash of the fountains, whose waters sparkle in the starry light as they rise and fall with ceaseless energy. At length a glow of light shone itself on the horizon, faint at first, but growing gradually stronger and more bright, as it precedes the rising moon. Nur Jehan watches the approach of the queen of night with the greatest apparent interest, but her eyes no longer wander through the fathomless expanse of heaven, but turn earthwards, and seem as if they would pierce through the furthest recesses of the garden, wrapt though they be in gloom.

But neither her searching eye nor her attentive ear can perceive the approach of a stranger into that secluded spot: a door in the wall at the furthest corner of the garden gently opens, and the figure of a man appears; he closes the door behind him again, as cautiously as he opened it, and disappears among the trees. And still Nur Jehan sits, patiently watching the rising moon.

Again, after the interval of about half an hour, the door re-opens. Again it is opened from the outside, and again a human figure appears on the threshhold. The same caution is observed in shutting it, but this stranger does not disappear nor hide himself among the shrubs as the last did.

Nur Jehan's patience is getting nearly exhausted. She is tired of looking into the garden and gazing at the moon, and moves restlessly in her seat. But what is that upon the path beneath her window? It is a shadow,—the shadow of a man cast there by the light of the half-risen moon. Nur Jehan darts one look of love, which would have been dangerous indeed had not the night robbed it of its power, and rising hastily, throws a cloak over her shoulders, and cautiously, though speedily, descends the stair case that leads

from her apartments to the garden. The figure on the pathway, as soon as she appears at the door, moves silently along the marble path towards the summer-house. She follows it, and then, in the midst of that lovely scene lit up by the moon's soft ray, under the marble dome, where the fountains play merrily, and their waters dance and sparkle like liquid silver in the moonbeam's light, Prince Selim and the lovely Nur Jehan renew their oft-plighted vows.

"These interviews, sweet though they are, are yet dangerous, my beloved one," said Selim after their feelings of love at first meeting had somewhat exhausted themselves in words and tokens of affection. "It is delightful thus to meet thee and press thee to my heart amid this enchanting scene, but it is misery—misery to think how soon we must part again, and how soon we may be parted, and for ever."

"Nay, my beloved prince, sweet Selim, say not for ever; fate may yet have happiness in store for us. Oh that those enchanting dreams that visit me at night, and gladden my sickened heart with their bright, bright visions of happiness, too great for words to describe, could in truth be a foreshadowing of the future! They may be, but the reality is distant, far distant—so distant indeed, that it seems almost vain to hope. Ah, Selim, how it makes me shudder to think how soon I may be consigned to the embraces of a man I cannot love, because my heart is thine."

"I am glad, my love, thou light of my heart, to hear thee speak in this strain. I have thought and thought and thought, and planned till my brain is nigh bewildered with the schemes I make. But I must tell thee all, my Nur Jehan. Tell me, love, hast thou heard aught of late about the nobleman who is destined to be thy lord?"

"No, I have heard nothing. Our only hope is that the marriage may be delayed some years, until the crown of the empire is seated on thy brow, my Selim, and then threats and promises will easily make him annul that accursed betrothal."

"Ah, it is but a deceitful hope, my fair one; our only chance is in flight, instant flight."

"Hast thou then lost all confidence in that charm?"

"Alas! the charm is gone. I put it, as the holy man bade me, under my father's pillow, and this morning it was gone."

"Gone?"

"Yes, gone, I know not how or whither, but some evil genius is at work, and the spell is not strong enough to overcome its power. I went the second time to visit the holy man, and he was gone too; fate is against us, dearest one, we must fly or be separated for ever."

"Ah, say not so, dear Selim, flight now would ruin us; we should be discovered; thy father's anger would brook no delay, and his power is far too great for us to trifle with. He would disinherit thee, and court-faction would league itself with thy father's anger, and thou wouldst lose thy crown and thy Nur Jehan too; think not of it noble prince, my love, my life. Willingly would I fly with thee, and with thee a desert would be far dearer than a paradise without thee, but let me not be thy ruin."

"Thy words are but too true, sweet love, yet I cannot, I cannot bear to think of thy being the bride of another; nothing will induce my father to have thy betrothal annulled; I know that well, yet there would be a chance of our escaping if we fled; my father might then relent, and the Persian nobleman be too proud to receive thee from the arms of another, and a rival."

"Think not, my Selim, that I fear to fly with thee, because I dare not trust thy love or thee; it is not that, but the chance of escape would be so small; my flight would be discovered in a few hours, and where could we take refuge or conceal ourselves from the power of thy father? Yet this much will I promise thee, my Selim. If this nobleman returns and claims me for his bride, and I fail in my endeavours to procrastinate the hated marriage, I will let thee know, and we will then try our only chance. Sher Affghan may take me as his bride, but he will see that my heart is another's, and it is possible he may relent; it is but a poor chance, but it is our only one."

"A poor chance indeed! but in the mean time we must avoid detection as much as possible, and forego, I fear, the pleasure of such delightful interviews as these. Yet I shall see thee at the palace, and thou must be content, sweet Nur Jehan, with looks, instead of words of love. Come let us prolong our interview to-night, as it is to be the last. The danger is in my getting here; when once here I can remain in safety; let us walk awhile underneath yon grove of orange trees, while I hold thee to my heart and forget the future, in telling thee of my love."

With these words, and with his arm clasped round the slender waist of the beautiful Nur Jehan, Prince Selim led her forth into the open air. They passed on side by side, and leaving the fountains that still played as merrily as ever behind them, bent their steps towards the further part of the garden, where a row of orange trees on each side of the path formed a shaded walk, lighted now only by the rays of the moon that penetrated through the overarching foliage of the fragrant boughs.

Engaged in sweet converse, the lovers had paced twice up and down the path, and were nearly reaching the bottom of it for the third time, when a rustling among the shrubs on the right hand side caused them suddenly to start. In an instant Selim's right hand clasped the hilt of his sword, while his left still encircled the waist of the trembling Nur Jehan. The next moment a figure appeared emerging from the shrubbery, and the bright moon beams flashed from the shining blade that the Prince drew from its scabbard. His motions however were arrested by the voice of the intruder.

"Hold, Prince," he said in a half whisper; "no violence is needed. Thy secret is safe with me, but fly lady, fly, and you too, Prince; do you not hear the voices? In another minute the Mirza will be here; he has been out, and returns this way."

Even while he was speaking Selim heard distinctly the voices of men approaching the garden wall. They seemed to be rapidly nearing it. He thought Mirza Ghaias had been at home, otherwise he would have taken

greater precautions, for he often returned at night, when absent from home till a late hour, through the garden, which led directly to his sleeping apartments. There was no time to be lost. He pressed Nur Jehan to his heart, and imprinted a hasty kiss upon her brow; the next moment she was hurrying up the pathway towards the house. With his drawn sword still in his hand, though all intention of using it had now vanished, Selim rushed into the shrubbery where the stranger had been concealed. He was most anxious to discover who it was that had thus possessed himself of a dangerous secret, but there was no time for playing a game of hide-and-seek with him now, for he had no sooner reached a place of safety, than the noise of a key turning in the garden door, and the voice of Mirza Ghaias dismissing his attendants for the night, told him it would be wise for him to remain where he was.

Mirza Ghaias entered the garden alone, and locked the door behind him. All unconscious of the presence of strangers in such a place as that, he walked leisurely up the avenue, and soon disappeared from Selim's view. The Prince waited till all chance of detection was over, and then commenced his search after the stranger who had given him such timely warning, but he was nowhere to be found. He wandered over the whole garden, and penetrated into the furthest recesses of the dense shrubberies; he paced over the marble pavement by the reservoir, and examined the summer house, and every alcove or place of concealment he could find, but without success. At length, fearful of being surprized in the forbidden ground by the approach of daylight, he was forced, unwillingly, to leave the place without making the discovery he was so anxious for. The passing glimpse he had got of the stranger, as he stood half concealed by the foliage of the trees, served more to perplex his mind than to assist him in forming any idea of the real character of the man who had thus so mysteriously appeared and disappeared. He seemed to be dressed, as far as Selim could tell, from the hasty glance he had of his form and figure, in the garb of the Christian priest, or Jesuit, several of whom were allowed by the emperor to reside in Delhi, and were patronized, to a certain extent, by his royal favour; but the voice, the voice he recognized, it was familiar to him.—"The dress was a disguise no doubt," he muttered to himself, "but the voice was that of Pir Ibrahim, the Fakir."

CHAPTER V.

Mirza Ghaias had returned from his visit to Pir Ibrahim with his mind distracted between ambitious projects and superstitious fears. The advantages of an alliance between the future Emperor and his daughter were too great a temptation for any man in his position to resist; but his designs or wishes to forward such a union were thwarted by the fact of Nur Jehan's betrothal to Sher Affghan Khan, a Persian adventurer like himself, who had risen to some little distinction in Akbar's service. At the time the be-

trothal was settled, Mirza Ghaias's position in life was far inferior to that he now held, and a union between that nobleman and his daughter was as high a match as he had any right to look to. But the times were changed.* Nur Jehan was a constant attendant upon the Emperor's Sultana, and in great favour with the ladies of the court; the Mirza's influence too with his royal master was increasing, and he was well aware from his daughter's character that if she were fortunate enough to secure an Emperor for her husband, her influence over him would be so great that he scarce knew where to draw the limit of his future greatness. But there were great, if not insurmountable obstacles in the path of his ambition; the first and greatest was the betrothal of his daughter to Sher Affghan Khan, and the next equal almost, if not greater, than the former, was the objection he knew the Emperor Akbar would have to his son and heir allying himself in marriage with a family so ignoble in comparison as that of the minister's. He had many enemies too at court, as every minister in the service of an Asiatic despot always has, and were his ambitious projects once to become known, or even guessed at, their efforts to compass his destruction would be almost invincible.

The first thing to be done was to get rid of Sher Affghan Khan, at all events for the present; if the marriage could be delayed till the death of the Emperor took place, and Selim was seated on the throne, he doubted not the young monarch would find some means of annuling the betrothal and obtaining the object of his passion. The thought of procuring the death of the Persian nobleman who stood so much in his way passed across his mind, but he dismissed it, indignant with himself for having felt for a moment the temptation. He was an ambitious man, but not yet sufficiently hardened to crime as to wish to arrive at his object by shedding blood; besides, setting aside the wickedness of such a proceeding, it would be a dangerous one, for as he well knew, murder sooner or later comes to light, and it was a far more prudent course for him to pursue to keep the whole matter secret, and allay all suspicion, while he found some means of keeping Sher Affghan Khan at a distance, and delaying the marriage. The thing that caused him the greatest anxiety was, was the Fakir to be trusted? He felt more persuaded than ever that Pir Ibrahim was not what he professed to be, and his suspicions were strong that he was in some way concerned with the secret system of robbery and crime which he had mentioned at his last interview with the Emperor. If he could only get, he thought, the Fakir in his power, it would be all well, but that could not now be done, without conniving in some measure at his crimes, and breaking the oath with which he had purchased the valuable secret, and which he felt all the reluctance of a superstitious mind to break.

The next interview he had with the Emperor, he succeeded in his plans so far as to persuade the monarch to entrust Sher Affghan Khan with a more important command than that he now held at Lahore, a command which he knew would require the Persian

nobleman's presence on the frontier near Peshawur. This promotion for his future son-in-law he begged and procured from the Emperor as a favour to himself. The post of honour was one which a brave officer could not but desire ; and shall we wrong human nature if we say that both the Prince and the minister reflected on the possibility of the Persian's falling by the hand of some of the robber tribes on the frontier, while in the execution of his duty, with a glow of satisfaction.

Mirza Ghaias's next subject of consideration was whether he should sound the Prince himself, and induce him, as it were, to make him his confidant. After much doubt and hesitation however, he determined to abstain from such a course at present, and by preserving the utmost secrecy, not even confiding his hopes and fears to Nur Jehan's mother, to leave matters to take their course, and the Prince's love to grow stronger day by day, while he kept Sher Affghan Khan away from Delhi. With regard to the Fakir, it was necessary to get him into his power, and to do this, he determined to proceed to the utmost limits consistent with his oath ; he could not molest Pir Ibrahim, nor even have him watched, without committing the crime of perjury, but the prohibition did not extend to the Fakir's accomplices, if he had any, and he determined to proceed cautiously, yet surely, to collect evidence, and prosecute his secret investigations in every quarter, till he had drawn the meshes of his net so tightly round his prey, that there should be no chance of his escape. This plan was made on the supposition of Pir Ibrahim's guilt, but almost every day brought fresh facts to light, which, though they did not absolutely criminate him, strengthened the suspicions that had long filled Mirza Ghaias's mind. And so things went on.

One day the whole of Delhi was alive with the report of the approach of a famous conjuror, who was to amuse and enliven the idle people of the metropolis with his wondrous feats. The fame of Birbâr had spread far and wide throughout Hindustan, and there was, as rumour said, no limit to the power of his art. The strangest stories were circulated about him, and some said that he rode on the back of a tame tiger, and could make even the wild beasts of the forest subservient to his will. He was supposed to have learnt his art somewhere in the centre of the Deccan, and to have prepared himself for the acquisition of his almost supernatural power, by a long course of fasting and penance in the lonely jungles. As it was, the childish minds of the populace were filled with delight at the prospect of witnessing his feats, and were, as is often the case, ready to believe anything any body said about the conjuror and his powers.

No one seemed to trouble themselves much about the progress of the conjuror, and no one asked whence he came, or whither he was going. The first notice that had been received of his arrival was given by one well worthy of being the forerunner of so great a man. The good people of Delhi had been much astonished one afternoon by the appearance of a man, painted from head to foot with all the colours of the rain-

bow, and riding, or rather progressing, in a brazen chariot carved in the shape of a fiery dragon—and mounted on wheels, which seemed to be propelled by some unseen power—unless indeed the brazen image had the principle of vitality in it. This extraordinary creature or machine passed deliberately and slowly all through the principal thoroughfares of the city, and only stopped when it reached the neighbourhood of the Emperor's palace. Here the rider of the brazen dragon preferred a petition to the monarch, praying for permission for his master, the wonder-working Birbâr, to establish himself for a while within the royal city, and make some money by exhibiting his feats to the people. Permission was readily granted, and the fame of the wonderful dragon reached the ears of the Emperor himself. His desire to inspect the wonderful machine was no sooner expressed than gratified, and the dragon had a private audience with the monarch, who was amused and gratified by the inspection of so wonderful a specimen of mechanical genius and art.

Preparations for the conjuror's establishment were speedily set on foot, and progressed rapidly—and in a few days' time the man of the dragon was able to assure the passing multitude that the next day's sun would behold the advent of the King of Magicians into the centre of the universe—Delhi.

Mirza Ghaias, whose duty it was to make himself master of the circumstances and proceedings of all visitors and strangers at Delhi, soon discovered that the great conjuror was making a tour, and had been visiting some of the principal cities of the Empire; that he was, as report made him out, a wonderful Magician, and that the sums of money he collected by the exhibitions of his art were not inadequate to the extent of his fame. In the course of these necessary enquiries into the character of the expected stranger, the Mirza was accidentally apprized of the fact that for many days Pir Ibrahim had been absent from his shrine. He made no observations, and appeared to take no notice of the fact—but his secret measures of caution and watchfulness were redoubled.

The reader would peruse with incredulity an account of the miraculous feats performed by the famous conjuror; his entrance into the city, the wonderful appearance of his strange retinue, were enough to delight the populace for a month, and raised their curiosity and expectations to the highest pitch. Clad in a long white robe, with his magic girdle round his waist, and wand of office in his hand, the Magician appeared mounted in a chariot of ivory drawn by two tigers; he was followed and attended by a motley crowd of creatures, human beings no doubt they were, but in the disguise of all kinds of animals; cranes, huge fish, antelopes, monkies, and all sorts of nondescript monsters followed in the wake of their sovereign lord, jabbering, and croaking, and making all kinds of noises, much to the amusement of the inhabitants, as they passed through the crowded streets: and that religion might not be wanting to consecrate the strange pageant, a large car drawn by two fine elephants brought up

the rear of the procession, on which were depicted a number of scenes or representations selected from the tissue of fables that form so much of the religious system of the Hindoos.

As may readily be supposed, it was not long before the famous Birbár was honoured with a summons to exhibit his performances in the court of the wonder-seeking Emperor : and the dignitaries in the service of modern potentates may smile at the idea of ministers of state being called upon to attend their sovereign on the occasion of his witnessing a juggler's show. The large or public hall of audience was given up to the conjuror, and for two days previous to the exhibition no public durbar was held there, in order that Birbár might have no unfair advantage taken of him as it were, but have time to put his apparatus ready, and make all his preparations. Many and various were the tricks of jugglery and feats of strength that were exhibited to the delighted court, and the Emperor himself was no less pleased than his courtiers. The part of the entertainment however, that delighted the Emperor most, was the introduction of tigers and other wild beasts over which the Magician had acquired complete ascendancy, so that he could treat them as he pleased, without the slightest fear of their doing him any injury. The detail or description of conjurors' feats is always tedious and uninteresting, because their only charm consists in the suddenness with which unexpected results are produced from sudden causes and extraordinary phenomena presented to the eye, which can scarce believe what it is yet certain it beholds. The great conjuror was not the only man that officiated on the occasion, his subordinates seemed almost as well tutored in the magic art as he himself, and towards the close of the entertainment, he informed the spectators that the last feat of the evening would be performed by a brother Magician, whom he should have the honor of presenting to his Majesty.

The individual alluded to then came forward into the arena, and the practical eye of Mirza Ghaias, who had been watching closely every thing that went on, immediately detected, under the disguise of a Magician's imposing dress, the figure of Pir Ibrahim. He pretended not to take much notice of his proceedings, and showed, neither by glance or gesture, that he recognized the impostor. The preparation for the last feat of the tree of destiny were few ; a shallow earthen pot filled with mould was brought by the Magician and placed on the ground in the centre of the arena ; various incantations were muttered over it, and the imposing mummeries of the juggling craft performed with the usual ceremony. A tall basket, about four or five feet in height, was then placed over the earthen pot, and the incantations again repeated. After a short time had been allowed to elapse, the Magician prepared to withdraw the basket, and informed the audience that the tree of destiny had grown and borne its fruit. A murmur of applause ran through the assembly, when the basket was lifted up, and disclosed to view a tree of four or five feet in height, its branches covered with leaves, and drooping with the weight of golden fruit, in shape and appearance like apples. At the stem of

each was a little slip of paper, in which the name of one of the courtiers was written, so that there was one for every noble present. The Emperor too had not been forgotten, and an apple, with a label affixed to it like the rest, inscribed with the royal name, hung from the topmost branch. The nobles then stepped forward, and examined the fruit, when each plucked that inscribed with his own name. The Emperor too condescended to take his; he was the last to approach the tree, and all drew back to make way for him as he came forward. A smile played upon his noble countenance as he stretched forth his hand to pluck the fruit, but the instant the stem was dissevered from the branch on which it hung, the whole tree suddenly crumbled into ashes and disappeared. With a parting injunction to the Emperor and his nobles to eat their fruit the last thing at night before they laid down to sleep, and an assurance that the visions of the night would reveal to each his future destiny, the Magicians closed their entertainment.

"Who can tell but that this conjuring knave may be trying to poison us," said Akbar to his attendants, as he reached his private apartments; "bring me a knife."

A knife was brought, and with his own hand he cut the magic apple in two. The knife came in contact with some hard substance in the middle, and the Emperor perceived a small scroll of parchment concealed there; he drew it forth, and read the Persian verses that were inscribed upon it,—a translation of which is as follows:—

"The fire of love may burn in the heart of a Prince,
And the sword of the universe may be consumed by the light of the world."

The hidden meaning of the scroll was apparent from the play upon the words in the last line, which cannot be done justice to in the translation. The word used for sword in Persian was "Selim," and the light of the world was "Nur Jehan."

The Emperor crushed the scroll in his hands, and dismissed his attendants by a sign. Their wonder was excited, but their curiosity not gratified, and they listened while the sound of the Emperor's feet, as he paced up and down his apartment half the night, convinced them that the magic apple had made some revelation or other, that was anything but pleasing or soothing to the mind of their royal master.

CHAPTER VI.

The following morning Mirza Ghaias was surprised by a summons to wait upon the Emperor. He repaired at once to the palace, and found his royal master awaiting his arrival in the private hall of audience.

After receiving the minister's salutation, the Emperor addressed him with a smile.

"Well, noble Mirza, didst thou have many wonderful revelations last night—didst thou eat the Magician's fruit?"

"Lord of the Universe," replied the minister, "thy slave

feared poison, and cut open the apple before eating it."

"Ha! and didst thou discover aught inside?"

"Yes, noble sovereign—thy slave found a scroll of parchment, on which were written a few words in Persian."

"Didst thou read them? What were they?"

"They ran thus:—

"Oaths sworn on the Koran are registered before Alla."

"Is that all? Methinks the Magician might have found an easier way of letting thee know that—but I have sent for thee, Mirza, to speak to thee of thy private concerns, before the durbar begins, when we must betake ourselves to public business. Thou hast served me well and faithfully for many years, and I would fain reward thee if I could in such a way as not to increase the envy of thy enemies about the court: therefore I will not promote thee now, for thy sudden rise might but lead to thy fall. But thy daughter Nur Jehan—"

The Mirza's heart beat quick.

"She is betrothed, I know, to Sher Affghan Khan, a noble youth and a good and faithful officer—and one that can be trusted. I will thus reward thee, noble Mirza, the nuptials between thy daughter and her betrothed husband shall be celebrated without delay; the ceremony shall take place here in our royal court, and we will ourselves honor it with our presence; but my favor to thee shall not stop here. I will bestow a handsome estate on thy son-in-law in my province of Bengal—and he shall take his bride home, and enjoy the reward of his bravery and courage. What, Mirza, thou turnest pale!"

"Ah, most noble sovereign—the heart of thy slave is too full to speak: your Majesty's kindness and royal favour is enough to drown the senses of the humble creatures of dust that worship at the foot of thy throne," replied the minister, kneeling and touching the ground with his forehead.

"It is well, Mirza—now depart. Thy attendance at durbar to-day can be excused. Sher Affghan shall be recalled immediately to court by our royal express, and thou mayest begin to make the necessary preparations for the marriage."

It was Mirza Ghaias's turn now to be perplexed, and to pace in doubt and hesitation up and down his apartment, when he reached home.

The news spread quickly through the court that the beautiful Nur Jehan was to be married immediately, and her husband presented with a magnificent marriage present from the Emperor, consisting of a valuable estate, and swiftly travelled the royal express, hastened by the urgent commands of the Emperor, to proceed with the utmost expedition towards Lahore, and if Sher Affghan had left the city, to hasten after him with the Emperor's command to repair to Delhi with all possible speed.

As soon as Mirza Ghaias could recall his scattered senses, and determine on any course of action, he sought out Selim. The news had reached him already, and he was giving way to his first feeling of rage and vexation at it, when the minister was admitted to his apartment; they remained some time in conference together;

at length the minister left the palace, but he was disguised, and Selim calling the attendants who had announced his arrival, warned them on pain of instant dismissal from his service not to disclose to any one the fact of Mirza Ghaias having been there.

It wanted about an hour to the time of midnight when figures might have been seen approaching the wall of the garden in which Prince Selim had held his last interview with Nur Jehan. The moon had not risen, and the night was dark, the stars alone affording light scarcely sufficient to enable the Prince to pick his way over the broken ground that lay immediately outside the wall. He was on foot, but led behind him his favourite steed, saddled and ready for him to mount. He was accompanied by one attendant, who also led a horse behind him, but the saddle on the latter steed was of different form and structure from that which sat upon the Prince's. They reached the door of the garden in silence, and the Prince, giving the rein of his horse to the attendant, put the key gently in the lock, unfastened it, and entered. He then walked hastily along the path underneath the orange trees, until he reached the open space by the edge of the reservoir. Here he stopped, but had not waited more than a few seconds before another figure appeared emerging from the marble summer-house, and making its way along the path that led through the centre of the reservoir. "Is all ready, Mirza?" said the Prince, speaking in a whisper to Mirza Ghaias, for it was he, as he advanced to meet him. "The moon will be up soon, and we must be far away before that, if we would escape detection. Is your daughter here?"

"Yes, my lord," replied the minister, "I have been waiting here some time. I will go and hasten her."

"Be quick then," said Selim, impatiently, "I will wait here."

Mirza Ghaias then entered the house, but did not re-appear as quickly as Selim could have wished. He paced rapidly up and down the garden walk, with an impatient step, pausing every now and then to listen if there was any sound stirring to awaken suspicion. But all was silence. At length, and not before his patience had been well tried, Mirza Ghaias appeared at the door, followed by a slight figure, veiled. They descended the palace steps in silence, when the Mirza, taking his daughter's hand, placed it in Selim's, saying—

"Take her, noble Prince, from the only one who has a right to bestow her; take her, and may Alla bless thy union." There was no time to waste in words: more than half an hour had elapsed since Selim entered the garden; he clasped the trembling form of his beloved one to his heart, imprinted one burning kiss upon her lips, and then led her hastily and in silence down the avenue to the garden door.

Here he left her for an instant to see if the horses were ready, and then returned, and made a sign for her to come. She embraced her father, as if for the last time, and then giving her hand to the Prince, mounted the horse with his assistance. The saddle on which she sat was a kind of pillion, padded with rich velvet, and formed in such a way that any one, how-

ever unused to riding, could sit securely and comfortably in it. The Prince gave the rein into her trembling hands, waved a parting adieu to Mirza Ghaias, and then sprang into his saddle.

Suddenly, as if they had dropped from the stars, four men rushed at the Prince, while a fifth held his horse, two more seized Nur Jehan. Selim's hand was at the same instant on the hilt of his sword, but a strong grasp kept his arm as if in an iron vice, and he could not draw the weapon. Overpowered by numbers he was dragged off his horse in less time than it takes to relate, and thrown upon the ground. His voice, almost choked with indignation and rage, could only find vent in broken curses, and he scarce had time to call out "Treachery, fly lady, fly!" before a hand was pressed upon his mouth, and he was prevented from uttering another word. His voice however fell all unheeded upon the ears of Nur Jehan, for she was being carried senseless into the garden of her father's palace. Selim, whose struggles to escape were ineffectual, tried in vain to discover who the perpetrators of this violence were; their faces were masked, and their persons were not familiar to him—their voices could not betray them, for not a word was spoken, as they seized the fallen Prince, bound his hands gently, yet securely, behind his back, tied a scarf over his mouth, so as to prevent him from making his voice heard, and carried him a little distance from the spot, where there was a closely covered litter or palanquin standing. He was thrust inside, and the doors were closed—he then felt himself lifted from the ground, and borne, he knew not whither.

After being carried for some distance in this manner, he perceived that his captors were conveying him into a house of some kind—and he plainly distinguished the sound of the bearers' feet treading over a paved floor—they then descended a flight of steps—a door was opened, and the palanquin deposited upon the ground. Selim waited, expecting an immediate release—but it seemed that his captors were determined not to afford him even this grace, for he heard them leave the apartment, and the door closed and bolted from the outside.

There was no course left now for him but to free himself as best he could—and this was no easy matter, for his hands had been securely bound. With his heart almost bursting with feelings of suppressed rage, he struggled, turned, and writhed his body from side to side, in the attempt to disengage his hands—"Let me but once get my hands free," he thought to himself, "and I will soon see how long this cage shall hold me." Despair and rage gave him renewed strength, and after struggling for nearly an hour in this way, he managed to squeeze one hand half through the knot—another struggle, and his arms are free. In an instant he tore the scarf from his face, burst open the doors of the palanquin, and leapt upon his feet. It was pitch dark, and he could not see an inch before him, so he commenced making an examination of his prison, by walking about and feeling before him with outstretched arms. It was no dungeon that he was confined in, for

the floor was covered with soft carpeting—and ever and anon he stumbled against a piece of furniture or a cushion on the ground. After completing in this way the examination of the apartment, he came to the conclusion that he had been confined in an underground room in the palace, which was often used by his father in the hot summer months, when the air of a room formed in this manner beneath the surface of the ground was much cooler than the upper apartments that were exposed to the heat of the atmosphere. Feeling convinced that what had taken place was by the orders of his father, and that he had therefore discovered and was determined to thwart his plans, in spite of every thing, he resigned himself to despair, and a mind like his but little accustomed to self-command soon found temporary refuge in schemes of future vengeance against the innocent, because involuntary ministers of his father's will, and amused itself by anticipating the time, when his father's crown should sit upon his own brow, and Nur Jehan should be his, in spite of every thing. Full of such thoughts as these, he threw himself upon the ground, and awaited the approach of daylight.

The Emperor's express overtook Sher Affghan Khan, when that nobleman was a few marches north of Lahore, on the way towards Peshawur. As may readily be supposed, he lost no time in obeying the welcome orders, and within an hour after the messenger had reached his camp, he was on his way to Delhi. He set out, accompanied only by one attendant, and as the horses that were kept at every stage along the roads throughout the Emperor's dominions for the purpose of conveying the royal messengers from one place to another with the utmost speed, were placed at his disposal, no unnecessary delay awaited him.

Words cannot describe the feelings of wretchedness and woe that Nur Jehan was a prey to, when returning consciousness brought with it the recollection of her misfortunes.

There was no longer hope of escape from the fate she so much dreaded, nor of realizing the dreams of happiness she had permitted herself to indulge in. The violence of her grief brought with it its own temporary cure, and her feelings found some relief in a passionate flood of tears. For two whole days and nights she remained in this way, utterly given up to sorrow, refusing all sympathy, deaf to all words of condolence, and yielding at times to the most furious bursts of passion.

At length her physical strength gave way under her mental sufferings, and thoroughly exhausted by the excitement her feelings had undergone, she sunk into a state of apathy and indifference to all about her, while her parents trembled lest reason itself should be shaken from her seat, and her unnatural calmness be succeeded by a state of mental derangement. In the mean time the preparations for the marriage went on, and Sher Affghan Khan, the bridegroom elect, rapidly neared the capital. Mirza Ghaias trembled like a criminal when led out for execution, the next time that he was summoned to the Emperor's presence. He well

knew that Selim's plans had been frustrated by the Emperor's order, for none but he would have dared to authorize such violence on the person of the heir apparent, and he naturally thought that the Emperor must be aware of his share in the proceeding. His mind however was considerably relieved when Akbar addressed him with his usual courtesy and condescension, and as there was nothing now to be gained by attempting to procrastinate the marriage, even if he could, he superintended the preparations for the ceremony with as much care as if he were really most desirous of seeing it solemnized, and with as much interest as his anxiety for his daughter's health would allow him to feel. As for the Prince Selim, although the Emperor had given out that he had gone on a hunting excursion, and would not be back for some days, most of the courtiers suspected there was more in his absence than they were aware of. Mirza Ghaias of course knew that he was somewhere under restraint, and expected that he would remain so until the marriage had been performed, and Nur Jehan was safely disposed of, but his place of confinement was unknown. Who it was that had played the traitor was equally uncertain, and the Mirza came to the only determination he could come to on the point, and that was to leave time to unravel the inexplicable mystery. Suspicion pointed at the Magician or Fakir, but the suspicion was of little use, for the object of it had disappeared, nor could any trace of him be found. The conjuror Birbár, when interrogated on the point, replied that he knew nothing of the last magician. For he had only joined him a few days before he arrived at Delhi, and had subsequently vanished as suddenly as he had appeared. Deprived of all aid or assistance from sublunary things, Mirza Ghaias had recourse to the stars, and night after night, though wearied out both in mind and body by the exertions and trials of the day, he sat up in his study or observatory, watching the motions of the heavenly bodies, and studying horoscopes, in the hope of thus obtaining some insight into the destiny of his daughter and himself.

Sher Affghan Khan at length arrived, and Nur Jehan heard with apparent apathy and indifference that her nuptials were to take place on the following day.

The wretched state of her health was reported to the Emperor, and he was petitioned to allow of the marriage being delayed, till she should be strong enough to undergo the fatigues of a journey to Bengal—but the Emperor was deaf to all entreaties on that point, "Not an hour," was his only answer. In spite of all that had been said about it, and in spite of the favour the bride elect was held in at the court, the marriage ceremonies greatly disappointed those who looked forward to enjoying the amusements and feasts on the occasion: there was a gloom over every body and every thing that could not be dispelled. Viands were untasted, musicians were not listened to, the dancing girls had somehow lost or forgotten their art, and an untimely shower of rain completely spoiled the fire-works; and more than one of the courtiers present were overheard to swear by the Prophet,

that "had it been the lady's funeral instead of her wedding, it would have gone off more merrily."

As for Nur Jehan, she of course took no part in the proceedings; her bridal dress, her jewels and ornaments were put on as she lay helpless on her cushions, and when the hour of departure arrived, she bade farewell to her parents and friends, and was carried into her palanquin with as much indifference as if she had been going out to pay a visit to a neighbour. Mirza Ghaias however was unusually gay and in high spirits all the day: he did his best to cheer his daughter, but he well knew there was but one way to do that, and he dared not speak of a dangerous subject amid so large a concourse as that assembled at his house. He accompanied the bridal procession however for some distance from Delhi. And when he stopped to take leave of his daughter, before he returned he managed to whisper some words into her ear, which for the first for many, many days, brought back her old expression to her worn and sunken features. At the same moment he placed a scroll of parchment in her hand, and telling her to examine it when alone, and bidding her be of good cheer, he took a formal leave of his new son-in-law, and turned his horse's head towards Delhi.

As soon as the cover of her palanquin was closed again, Nur Jehan opened the scroll. It was her horoscope, and underneath was written in her father's hand the magic words: "Nur Jehan is destined for an Emperor's bride."

Sher Affghan Khan's camp was pitched about six miles from Delhi, but it was late before they started, and the sun was down long before the tents were in sight. His friends had all left him to return to the city, and he was riding alone in front of the now small procession that consisted only of his bride's and her attendants' palanquins, and an escort of horsemen that followed in the rear. The road led for some distance through a thick jungle, which was the favourite hunting ground of the Emperor; and as it was a lonely place, and not altogether safe for a lonely traveller at night, Sher Affghan reined up his horse, and halted to await the arrival of the escort. Whilst waiting in this way, his attention was suddenly arrested by a rustling noise among the trees on the road side: he turned his head in the direction the sound came from, and at the same instant a man appeared, mounted on a fine horse, and galloping at full speed. The appearance of the stranger was such as to attract attention anywhere, for he was a large and powerful man; the horse had no saddle on its back, and the rider wore no clothes, except a cloth wrapped round his waist; nor was he armed; his long black hair hung from his head over his back and shoulders, and his horse was covered from head to foot with foam. Sher Affghan had but little time however to examine his appearance, for almost the instant after he emerged from the bushes he was at his side, and reined in his foaming steed.

"Sher Affghan," he said, "nay, do not draw thy sword, I am unarmed. I come to warn thee; beware, thou hast a serpent in thy bosom, a tiger in thy path, and a

naked sword over thy head." Before the astonished nobleman could utter a reply, the stranger had dashed into the bushes on the side of the road again, and was hid from sight.

Three days after Nur Jehan's departure from Delhi, the Emperor casually observed to his courtiers in durbar, that on the following day the Prince Selim would return from his hunting expedition. They glanced at one another, and remained silent.

LOVE WORLDLY.

On a mountain, near the summit,
Was a cold and silent lake,
Of whose waters dark, no plummet
Could the unfathomed soundings take.
By the herbless granite bounded,
Upon every side surrounded,
Not a breath of Heaven could play,
Where its waveless surface lay.
Though the Hurricane were raving,
Though the oaks its fury braving,
Shattered all around were lying—
Though the echoing glens replying
To the storm that frantic sweeps,
Howling round the shivering steeps,
Utter forth that hollow cry,
Nature's voice in agony—
Though with ear confounding thunder,
Cliff and glacier burst asunder—
Still amid its guardian rocks,
The sullen tarn the tempest mocks,
Untouched, untroubled it reposes,
And not one feathery ripple bright,
Its sombre pall-like flat discloses,
Black as a starless night!
Let that rock-cradled pool express,
The heart whose sunless feelings lie,
Bosomed in sheltering selfishness,
In chilly apathy,
Whose love is only kind through fear;
Only from interest sincere;
Constant, from only indolence;
Trusting, from mere indifference;

That but from coldness shuns to harm ;
That, without energy to warm,
Hopes but exemption from distress,
Dreams not of Love's true happiness,
That sympathy of two fond hearts
That only in each other live,
That pure affection that imparts,
The dearest joy that heaven can give,
To fill with bliss the loved one's breast,
And in *her* gladness, to be blest ;
Which even in *sharing* bitterest woe,
More real happiness can know.
Than those dull earthly ones can deem,
Who think true love an idle dream.
And name they *love !* that nerveless sense,
Of unimpassioned preference,
Of world-seared hearts that cannot swerve,
From their impassible reserve ;
That with unsympathizing eye,
Can look on grief or misery,
Or (worst of all) that ache of heart,
When disenchanted woman sees,
Her fairy dreams and hopes depart,
Like flitting smoke before the breeze ;
Her tenderness and kindness slighted,
Her love's sweet blossoms chilled and blighted ?
Call not such, Love ; let not the name,
So sacred still, be so debased ;
Nor falsely paint for very shame,
As Paradise, that barren waste !
Not such that soother of our woes,
That source of all our joys can be ;
Oh ! not like such, the love that glows,
Deep in my inmost heart for Thee.

K.

INDIA AND HER PRESENT RULERS.

"Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento."
VIRGIL.

UNDER all the circumstances of its growth during the last hundred years, our Indian Empire at this moment furnishes a spectacle without parallel in any age or crisis of the world's history. Turn to whatever leaf you please of that history, recal whatever passages of it may seem at first thought similar to this one, you shall nowhere find anything like a fitting counterpart to the tale of Anglo-Indian conquest from the days of Clive to the era of Lord Dalhousie. A tale of wonder and deep significance in many ways; rich in retrospects not always pleasing yet seldom entirely painful; and very far from barren in lessons which we and the generations after us should do well to con more carefully, than Englishmen since the days of Burke have generally been wont to do.

Instances enow there have been of empires formed under grander auspices, attaining to an earlier maturity, and extending over wider tracts of peopled territory. Less than an average lifetime sufficed for the world-wide conquests of Alexander. Those of Timour included this very peninsula which it has taken more than a century of constant warfare to make our own. The Romans under their first Cæsars enjoyed the mastery of nearly all Europe and some of the finest provinces in Asia. Napoleon's empire threatened at one time to be hardly less extensive. That of Russia is spread over a continent larger than the whole of Europe. Independently of her Indian provinces Great Britain herself has rivalled ancient Rome in the extent and number of her territorial offshoots. But the growth of her Indian power is a thing quite unique for all that. In the whole course of our historical experience there is really nothing to be compared, in points of radical importance, with the strange spirit-stirring results of British enterprise on the broad plains and among the swarming populations of Hindostan. The conquests of Alexander and Napoleon were great creations, which sprang up in a night like Jonah's gourd to wither in the very hour of their maturity. Love of conquest and self-aggrandisement were the motives which chiefly lured them on to enterprises more brilliant than wise or gainful, and such as their own weakness or that of their successors was sure to render abortive in the long run. With all its adaptability to the wants and circumstances of the peoples beneath its shadow, the sway of the house of Timour had virtually been broken to pieces, long before Clive had exchanged his writer's pen for the sword which laid the foundation of our political ascendancy in the East. In the circumstances which ensured the progress of Roman rule, there lay also the seeds of its dissolution,

at such time as the conquered peoples began to emerge from the barbarism which had mainly contributed to their subjugation by a power more highly civilised, though perhaps essentially weaker and less capable of true civilisation than themselves. Rome's ascendancy was founded on her arms alone. As the young nationalities of modern Europe grew up into man's estate, they learned to measure their own strength with hers, and snapped in due time their childish fetters as easily as Sampson did the bonds of Dalilah.

Very different have been the circumstances which mark the growth of our Indian empire. Could one of those peaceful quill-drivers with whom young Robert Clive first cast his lot, in the East India Company's modest factory at Madras, be suddenly roused from his long death-sleep to look upon the India of 1853, without any previous knowledge of what had happened during those hundred years of unconsciousness, he would certainly be rather puzzled to fill up in any authentic or self-evident way the eventful gap between epochs so dissimilar—to make out by his own experience of past events the due connexion between the scanty range of warehouses then rented on sufferance to his humble and oppressed employers, and the vast tracts of populous territory ruled by their world-famous successors of the present day. In the huge but well-knit and not unlovely proportions of the giant figure which met his gaze, he would hardly be able to discover a touch of likeness to the ricketty bantling whose childish lineaments he had erewhile known so well. What series of strange events, what workings of human destiny had tended to produce a change so marvellous, it would tax his imaginative and reflective powers for many a long day to guess aright. A stranger or wilder story than that he would have to listen to, has seldom if ever waited to be told to ears not rashly credulous of improbable tales. He would learn how a company of timid and peace-loving merchants had succeeded in their own despite, against all human likelihood, in founding an empire as large as half Europe, and more than thrice as populous as Great Britain; overthrowing in their fated course one after another of those ancient sovereignties whose power to crush them had seemed but now so irresistible, and against which they took up their arms so often in sheer necessity, amidst the dismalest fears and forebodings, and with a thousand motives, expressed or understood, for avoiding the greatness so strangely thrust upon them. He would learn how each new conquest had led to new perplexities, new engagements, new quarrels, with neighbours destined in their turn to merge into new tributaries or subjects of the power they had erewhile laughed at from a distance, or made so little account of meeting face to face. He would learn how each nation so conquered, swelling in its turn the armies of its new masters, ensured them the maintenance of their former conquests, and supplied them with the safest means of preparing for the conquests yet to come. He would learn how a hundred millions of people, of races, creeds, manners as unlike each other as each was unlike our own, had come to acknowledge

and peacefully to acquiesce in the conditions of a yoke enforced by the agency of a few thousand foreigners, whose lives would hardly be worth a day's purchase against odds so tremendous, if only they could ever be arrayed with sufficient concert for the assertion of what should naturally be their common cause. And, having so learned, he would still be free to wonder at the chance which left a work so eventful to be wrought out by British hands ; still be free to admire the noble diffident unhasty way in which that work on the whole has been carried on ; still be free to speculate on the coming destinies of that remarkable nation whose political greatness is still the wonder, as its commercial progress has long been the envy of the world.

Speculation not altogether cloudless, as far as India is concerned. Not that we have any great cause for fear as to our political ascendency in that quarter. We have no fair grounds just now for thinking that the prize so hardly won will be lightly lost. We are bold to say that the glory of our Indian Empire is not likely to depart for many a long year to come. The contrary notion seems to us, at this present, rather chimerical than otherwise. Britain's legions are still invincible as ever. Our Sepoy Army is not fatally demoralised yet. New blood for filling its ranks and strengthening its weakened discipline is still available from more than one likely source. The old antagonism of creeds and races has got some new elements of late to keep it from running stagnant. The bulk of our dusky fellow subjects are as fond as ever of a quiet life. The warlike minority is small in numbers and weak in prestige. Young Bengal has learned to affect the social customs without emulating the moral energy of his Saxon model. He cannot doff the inertness of his Hindoo temperament as quickly as he doffs the absurdities of his Hindoo mythology. His patriotism never vents itself in aught more alarming than a letter to the newspaper or a speech at some public meeting. His dreams of political freedom rarely soar beyond the indulgence in a taste for wine, and an insane desire to drive his own buggy. To conceive a Hindoo Kossuth calling seriously on his countrymen to arm in concert for the expulsion of their Feringhee oppressors, would be tantamount to conceiving a change in national idiosyncrasy, such as nature in her wildest moments has never yet been known to contemplate, much less to carry into practice. As far as present appearances are concerned, the permanence of British rule in the East is a question not to be discussed for many years to come. Do what circumstances may to encourage such an issue, we firmly believe that the emancipation of India from her present yoke is a contingency just possible a hundred years hence, but not sooner.

Still the very likelihood of such an issue should keep us the more steadily alive to the privileges and responsibilities of our present position, as guardians of a people not yet sufficiently ripe for taking care of themselves. Let the rulers of India govern as well or as badly as they please, there is small fear of their course being presently stayed, either by a general rising of their subjects at home, or

the interference of national enemies abroad. The Governments of Europe are much too busy just now with their own affairs to think of rifling the colonial treasures of their British rival. Native indolence and disunion are our surest safe-guards against internal dangers. But these are paltry considerations at the best. English rulers should have higher grounds to work upon than the fact of their present strength, or the absence of immediate danger from the possible abuse of their present strength. They have higher duties to think of than the mere government of a great colony on terms the most remunerative to themselves. The question now before them is, whether India shall henceforth be governed for its own sake rather than theirs, for the moral and political benefit of its own people rather than the material benefit of their present masters. Taking for granted the approach of a time when India shall be fit to govern herself, they have now to consider how England can best discharge the trust meanwhile consigned to her, how best fulfil the sacred duty of preparing her feeble protegée, by a course of sound and careful training, for the necessary though dangerous freedom to which that protegée shall eventually attain.

For in truth our Indian government has hitherto been little better than a continued makeshift; a thing of chance odds and ends, of temporary shreds and patches; a mère accidental chaos of materials, good, bad and indifferent, put together from time to time without order, forethought or visible meaning, and recalling at every view of it the wildest anomalies and unsightliest details without any of the pervading beauties of an old English mansion in the Tudor style. During the troubled infancy and busy youthhood of our Anglo-Indian power, such a Government was perhaps as tolerable as any, while the event has proved it to have been sufficient for the need. While Hyder was wasting the Carnatic, it mattered comparatively little how far Warren Hastings misused his power to the detriment of one or two unoffending victims, provided his signal talents availed to rescue British India from the gripe of its fiercest and then most dangerous foe. Amidst the turmoil and excitement of a Mahratta campaign or a quarrel with Burmah, it was natural that our Indian statesmen should have been readier to aid in extending the limits of their masters' sway by warlike means, than to waste their midnight oil in concerting peaceful schemes of internal reform for the peoples already subjected to their masters' sway. To the mass of our native subjects the Government which taxed them heavily for the protection of their lives and property, seemed infinitely preferable to Governments which had used them worse without ensuring them the like protection in return.

They felt that the strong hand of their new masters was as powerful at all times to put down oppression from other quarters, as it was liable sometimes to be laid oppressively on themselves. It was something gained at least to suffer from the occasional misrule of one instead of the systematic violence of many. The enjoyment of social peace and personal

freedom, the right to sow and reap without fear of hostile inroads, the reduction of rich and poor, strong and weak, to one common level of obedience to established law ; were blessings not to be despised by men who had hardly dared at any former period to look on their very lives as placed at their own disposal. To the men of trade and learning, who lived by satisfying the wants or repairing the deficiencies of their peaceful neighbours, to all in short whose wealth or hopes of advancement were staked on peaceful pursuits, the Government which succeeded best in preserving peace within its own dominions and crushing the hostile designs of neighbouring princes, seemed to put forth as strong a claim to their allegiance as the most exacting among them could well desire. It was not a perfect nor even a popular Government which they had gotten now. But they felt that under the circumstances it was the best they were like to get for many a long day.

But things have altered greatly of late years. What was once a comparative blessing may now be threatening to become erelong a positive curse. The infant has been growing out of his clothes, and we have forgotten to get new ones ready for him. Smike's trowsers are mounting fast above his boots. Mend and patch them as you will, you cannot get them to sit becomingly now. Not all the ingenuity of your Hogges and Hobhouses ; not all the statecraft of your Thomasons and Dalhousies ; not all the shifts and subterfuges of your Campbells and Melvilles, can ever avail to turn that old shrunken ill-looking garment into anything like the smart well-fitting article, which a youth of ordinary standing would long since have been allowed to don. No amount of special pleading and one-sided logic, of clever garbling and eloquent sophism on the part of our Anglo-Indian conservatives, can blink our eyes any longer to the fact that India has outgrown a system of political training, invented to meet the exigencies and accord with the political ignorance of former days alone, and that justice, policy, and late experience alike suggest to her present masters the adoption of some worthier and more efficient substitute for the time to come. The old edifice has more than served its time already. Being at the best a temporary structure, built on principles no longer tenable in these wiser days, it has clearly no business here among people whose eyes are fast opening to its numerous defects. In a state of things which argues radical unsoundness, a reform which stops short of virtual reëdification will only hasten the crisis which a truer policy might succeed in putting off for an unlimited period, if not for ever. The house we live in shows daily worse and more startling symptoms of approaching decay and present unfitness for any household purpose. To talk of replacing a beam here, or propping a weak section of wall there, is simply waste of time, if nothing further is to follow at an early date. The whole thing cries out for swift removal. To be worth anything hereafter, our Indian polity must be built up anew, and that right speedily.

There is no time like the pre-

sent for laying hand to a work so needful, so big with ulterior profit to the parties most concerned in seeing it fairly begun and wisely followed. The past with its continual dangers and swift-recurring perplexities, its long wars and broken peace-slumbers, its political doubts, ignorances, and inconsistencies on the one hand, and its social ferments, miseries, and barbarisms on the other, has fairly betaken itself to its proper limbo, and become for us in these days a thing as strictly historical as the wars of the Roses. A fair day of peace and hopefulness has begun to smile at length upon the scene so lately darkened by a night of warfare, and disturbance fated, as it then seemed, never to have a morrow. The last shot fired in anger on the field of Goojrat heralded the day-spring of a new era in the destinies of British India. From that moment the question of British supremacy, a question hitherto asked in fear, misgiving, or deprecation, as often as in hope and honest confidence, became fairly settled into a plain, irrevocable, and not very disgraceful fact. Lord Gough had finished what Clive began. The field so often fought over was ours at last for good. Our worst foes had yielded themselves one after another in utter weakness and despair to conquerors ignorant of their real strength, and ashamed of the victories which helped to make them wiser. The rich inheritance of the Moguls was become the inalienable appanage of the Saxon. Henceforth the latter would be free to make what he best could of a sovereignty so extensive and so strangely acquired. He would be free to look about him without fear of danger, or thought of interruption; free to calculate in peace and perfect leisure the full extent and richness of his various conquests; free to make up by increased watchfulness, zeal, and industry thereafter, the losses necessarily entailed and the omissions generally to be accounted for by the events and exigencies of his past career. During the struggle which had ended so well for him, the tenor of his domestic affairs had depended more or less thoroughly on the vicissitudes of his foreign relations. Want of time, want of money, want of statesmanlike experience, were sufficient excuses for nearly all the misdeeds, omissions, blunders, inconsistencies, which could then have been brought home to the doors of the East India Company. It was certainly hard for a Government possessing scanty means and harassed by a crowd of conflicting views and interests, to combine the maintenance of a sound political system at home with the due development of its moral strength and warlike activity abroad. But all that is past and forgotten now. Such excuses are quite inadmissible henceforward. The conquerors of India have won chiefly by their own exertions, though hardly of their own desire, a prize of which they need not be ashamed. It remains for them to shew by their future policy how far they are fit to enjoy the fruits of their past successes. It remains for them soon or late, and the sooner the better, to decide how much longer India is to sit uneasily between her two stools; how much longer to endure the needless torture inflicted by her India House doctors on the one hand, and the ruthless

remedies prescribed by Cannon Row quacks on the other.

Now or never, should Englishmen bestir themselves, in Parliament or elsewhere, to learn somewhat touching their India affairs. Periodically indeed they have hitherto made a pretence of so doing. Once in about twenty years does England delight to sit in judgment upon the state and prospects of her remote dependency and the conduct of its delegated rulers. At such epochs the British public falls, as if charged with galvanism, into a most edifying state of passing excitement. Every body is heard to talk about the Indian Charter. Many are constantly to be found discussing the modes and counting the chances of its renewal. Statesmen in Parliament begin to get up their speeches and look up their 'Mills.' The Humes and Ansteys begin to muster their motley facts and figments for a tremendous onslaught against the tyrants of Leadenhall. The Hoggs and Hardinges get ready to beat back their old assailants with weapons chosen from the same promiscuous store. Ministers begin to ponder on the best way of finishing a tiresome business at the smallest possible sacrifice either of public decencies or private understandings. Patriots out of Parliament get up their public meetings, their noisy pamphlets, their monster petitions. The press of England begins to lay down the law on Indian topics of whatever sort, with a precision which would have confounded a Crichton, and a gravity which Liston himself would have despaired of imitating under like circumstances. Everywhere the cry is great, or seems so; but how about the wool?

Rather a Flemish reckoning of it on the whole, one is apt to fear. An outcome miserably vague and infinitesimal. Hitherto the periodical solemnity has proved no better than a periodical farce. No matter how gravely the thing began, its end has invariably been marked by a change as laughable as that which generally astonishes the reader of Bon Gaultier. For some months, it may be sometimes for a year or more, the excitement runs its course. Parliamentary Committees take down their evidence, the raw material of an impending Blue Book. Orators and writers talk or scribble away on either side of a question which few of them have studied save in the most cursory fashion. Public feeling sets rather ominously against the India House, and blurts out the strongest expressions of regard and pity for the poor, ill-fed, ill-treated natives of Hindostan. Vague mournings over our past neglect and mismanagement mingle with the wildest proposals for effecting all sorts of impossible reforms. Angry demands for the suppression of actual grievances are followed by stern denunciations of grievances which have never existed, or for which a remedy has long since been found. Controversies on every possible feature of our Indian policy, are waged with a zeal betraying small discretion and less knowledge. There is talk enough about doing something. There is no agreement as to what shall be done. The most palpable result of all this excitement has ever been to defeat its ostensible aims, and to shew how thoroughly the people

of England have ever failed to master the simplest details and most prominent specialties of the case at issue. While all are disputing about they know not what, the time for settling the question slips away. But it has to be settled somehow, even at the eleventh hour. Amidst the strife of tongues and the jarring of adverse opinions, it is easy for the party awaiting its sentence to patch up a sort of mutual compromise with its ostensible judges. Downing Street has its own sufficient reasons for pressing lightly on its India House ally. The old system is allowed to run on with certain modifications for another term of years. A few concessions have been made to this or that influential party, but the change on the whole has fallen wofully short of the general expectation. Meanwhile the public feeling has burned itself out. Tired of disputing to no purpose, people are glad of an excuse for getting quietly back to their old corners. The hubbub but now so mighty subsides as galvanically as it began, and John Bull has erelong ceased to look on India and her concerns as things more nearly related to him than the islands in the Pacific Ocean.

It is amusing indeed to mark the obstinacy with which most Englishmen at home cling to their obsolete or untenable views on the subject of our Indian policy past and present. It is hardly too much to say, that their acquaintance with the leading features and defects of that policy has made no practical advance upon that which satisfied their forefathers in the days of Fox and Burke. One set of declaimers are perpetually praising by wholesale that very mixture of good and evil, which another set of declaimers are perpetually given to condemn by wholesale. The entire course of British state-craft in India is regarded by the one with feelings of unmixed complacency, by the other with feelings of nearly as unmixed disgust. By the one our dealings with the people of this country are apt invariably to be characterised as master-pieces of human virtue and administrative wisdom. By the other they are just as apt to be set down for monuments of human folly, of consummate ignorance, of unbridled profligacy. In so arguing both parties are pretty equally at fault. Both start from premises equally unsound. Both shut their eyes to circumstances equally patent, equally suggestive, equally at variance with the conclusions of either. Each arrives at a positive falsehood by overleaping or straying wide of half the truth. The one are pleased to ignore the peculiar circumstances under which our countrymen pursued the work of Indian conquest and pacification. The other are pleased to forget the peculiar circumstances of the people among and for whom that work has been carried on. It is mere falsehood to say that our Indian policy has been either wholly good or wholly evil. And it is hardly more foolish to maintain that the people of India are still unfit for any government short of a virtual despotism, than it is foolish to maintain their actual fitness straightway to encounter the perils of a governmental system modelled in the likeness of that which works so admirably in other portions of the British Empire. India has indeed outgrown her

childish garments. But she has yet to outgrow and fairly get herself disburdened of her childish ways.

A hope however begins to dawn upon us, that this state of things must erelong pass away; is already making some half-conscious effort to pass away. The pending inquest on Indian affairs has let loose a world of new and powerful influences for stirring the dry bones of British indifferentism, and pouring light on the darkness of Anglo-Indian politics. The truth of the matter is beginning to force itself in various ways on the notice of all thinking minds. Englishmen are beginning to see that stolid apathy and ignorant zeal can no longer make head, as of old, against the forces now mustering for their discomfiture. India House conservatism is already quaking in its shoes. Radicalism of the old Anstey school sings smaller and smaller day by day. The wilful reticences of the one, the egregious blunders of the other, grow daily more visible to the public eye as the agents of their exposure grow daily louder and more numerous. India herself has found a voice to which men must listen with however forced a will. Her own children, the best, the highest, the wealthiest, the most influential of her many-tongued citizens, cry out in very significant tones for the establishment of a sounder, happier, more creditable state of things; for the redress of grievances which seem no longer tolerable, and the fair enjoyment of rights which cannot in justice be any longer withheld. From every quarter, piercing more and more sharply through that dense inner atmosphere, do sounds of warning and supplication, of grave remonstrance and keen rebuke, impassioned protest and clear, cool-headed recital, roll onwards to the common centre, drowning all other Babels in their own, and striking on the public ear with a meaning which the most thoughtless may partly penetrate even now. A great and earnest cry, to which England must give heed quickly at her peril; to which indeed she dare not refuse to hearken if she would.

To admit of her hearkening to it as she ought, some other means must be adopted than those which she has hitherto been satisfied to employ. Legislation by fits and starts, by India House bleedings and Cannon Row restoratives, by obsolete prescriptions at one moment and empirical appliances at the next, cannot possibly effect any large or salutary purpose henceforward. Partial remedies will never counteract an evil aggravated by continued neglect. The patient's case needs treating far more radically than that. Its diagnosis must be taken over again. Careful inquiry into its earlier phases should go hand in hand with close unflagging scrutiny of its present symptoms; and both be followed at short distance by calm but earnest consideration of the modes of treatment open for future adoption. A Parliamentary committee like that which has just dissolved itself is altogether behind the wants of this active age. It cannot possibly perform the work required of it, as such work should be performed. Compared with its nominal functions, its actual proceedings are the height of farce. Assembled merely for a few months, it has somehow or another to get through in that

period what should rather be the work of years. Selected for this or that impertinent reason, its members are as likely as not to give the farce a yet more farcical turn by displaying a hopeless ignorance of the matter in hand, or an equally hopeless subservience to the interests of this or that particular party. Any one of the subjects on which it has to gather its evidence and draw out its reports, would need for its fair hearing more than the time permitted for examining all. And even that little time may be thrown away on subjects comparatively trivial, or frittered in bootless efforts to grapple with some point of peculiar intricacy. Amidst the heap of motley and conflicting details, the accumulated rubbish of some twenty years, through which such a committee has to pick its way, the chances of lighting on a clue to their right adjustment become gradually smaller, as the hour for closing its labors in that Augean stable draws gradually nigher. Even of those labors the immediate result may exceed the final issue. The best of British statesmen are still human. Press of other business may defeat the best intentions of ministers as wise as Peel and as honest as Lord John Russell. Want of sufficient influence or popularity may nullify the worthiest efforts of reformers as bold as Fox and as eloquent as Burke. The Court of Directors has never been poor in friends or in the means of purchasing them at need. Wealth and patronage are great magicians even now. Party spirit has not died out yet. And so it has happened more than once or twice, that a whisper from the India House has out-spoken the loudest pleadings of disinterested committees, and led the Ministers and Parliaments of the day to mock the hopes of even the most moderate champions of political progress, with a final scheme of Anglo-Indian reform so altered and cut down from the shape originally proposed for it, as hardly to differ in any essential feature from the system it was intended to supersede.

Such *laissez-faire* modes of governing cannot decently be tolerated any longer. They merely evade the difficulty, not meet it. They cannot possibly satisfy the wants or win the affections of a people already alive to the vices and defects of our administrative system, already clamoring for a larger and more perfect measure of political power than we have hitherto deemed them worthy, at least in practice, to enjoy. Persistence in them, how safe soever for a time, must redound eventually to our own harm and annoyance, no less than it is already redounding to our own visible discredit and reproach. Acts of wilful injustice must tend to lower the character of nations no less than that of men. Our pride as Englishmen should quicken in this matter that sense of justice and love of fair dealing for which England has hitherto been remarkable in no ordinary degree. The future government of India is a question which concerns our worldly fame even more than it concerns our worldly interests. To settle that question at once or even presently may be difficult, impolitic. perhaps impossible. To prepare the way for its settlement, to begin discussing it in sober

earnest, with the intent to have it fairly argued out anon, is a duty which every Englishman possessing the power, should think it foul shame any longer to show a reluctance, to aid in discharging.

We confess to being neither Guelphs nor Ghibelins in this matter. It is not as champions of either Crown or Company that we lay such stress on a point so carelessly regarded heretofore. It matters little to our thinking under what name the external government of this country shall henceforth be carried on. We have no wish to see the powers of the East India Company curtailed by fresh additions to the powers of the Board of Control. We are not for placing India under the control of any minister or ministerial body representing the power or policy of the Crown alone. The political history of Canada and the Cape colony affords no very pleasing contrast to that of British India. What we really want is, to see adopted for British India such a scheme of simple and uniform government, guarded by such powerful checks and kept in working order by such active agencies and jealous yet healthful overlookings, as Englishmen in the like circumstances, if that were possible, would desire to see adopted for themselves. Hitherto England has behaved to her eastern dependency much as the purse-proud father of little Florence Dombey behaved to his innocent and neglected child. She has left others to perform a duty which none could be expected to perform as well as herself.' We want to see her atone for her past negligence. We want to see her forgotten protegée rescued at once from the hands of opposing cliques and ignorant tutors, and made over henceforward to the virtual guardianship and general supervision of her truest and best protector—the British nation.

Whatever needs to be done for the attainment of such an end, one thing at least must be undone with the smallest possible delay. The present system of double government, by means of the India House on one hand and the Board of Control on the other, is a standing evidence of either the moral turpitude or the political blindness of all who set it moving or voted for its subsequent renewal. Absurd in principle and mischievous in practice, it has only served to aggravate the evils which it was deemed so powerful to counteract and do away. What of good such a system has hitherto effected by its own peculiar virtues, it would be very difficult to say. Its power for evil and wrong-doing was sufficiently displayed in the self-offered confessions of Lord Broughton. Its effect has virtually been to transfer the initiative of Indian Government from hands comparatively expert and trustworthy into hands altogether rude, unpractised, and unsafe. It has turned the Court of Directors into little better than a channel for executing the will of Cannon Row. As often as the two have come in contact, has the Secret Committee been forced to take up the policy decreed by the Board of Control. In all questions of the last resort the voice of the India House has been raised in vain to combat the views and sentiments of its doughty rival. It was idle for the French philosopher to argue with the absolute monarch of

a powerful nation. It has proved just as idle for the sages of Leadenhall Street to measure logic or eloquence with a body so absolute and irresponsible as that of which Sir John Hobhouse was erewhile the fitting representative, and whose power for mischief is still attested in the lowness of an Exchequer impoverished by the needless drain of a long Affghan war.

Such a system needs prompt and thorough reform. One of the two elements which have worked so fatally together, must be eliminated at once and for ever. The other must be placed on a firmer and more intelligible footing for the time to come. If the East India Company is still to retain its nominal prerogatives, the Board of Control should be clean swept away. One deliberative body of experienced and able men will always work better and cost less for India, than two made up in the present fashion. Half a dozen approved councillors, chosen for their knowledge of Indian affairs and aptness for official work, would probably suffice for the direction of all those home details which are now supposed to engross the time and attention of the Court of Directors. A gross anomaly would thus be effectually got rid of. A mischievous and absurd antagonism would no longer waste the resources and cramp the growth of this fair empire. With such a body working at home, it would matter little under what name the government might be carried on abroad. Such a body, subject to the due control and moving under fit auspices, would erelong prove to India as great and certain a blessing as the present crude, clumsy, two-edged system has hitherto proved a curse.

That control, those auspices would have to be supplied by the British nation and its chosen delegates. It is with her own proper voice that England should speak henceforward to her Indian children. She must allow no interested go-betweens, no false-hearted advisers to usurp her rightful functions any more. Cannon Row prescriptions once fairly cast to the winds, spasmodic parliamentary committees must prepare to follow anon. Henceforth the nation's servants must be made responsible to the nation alone. England has a right to demand that the supreme control and final direction of her Indian affairs shall be assumed and exercised with all needful diligence by the Imperial Legislative, as the one efficient mouthpiece of the national mind. She has a right to demand that the members of that Legislative shall henceforth keep a watchful and jealous eye upon the measures of their subordinate agents; shall look to have rendered, not here and there, nor at long intervals, but day by day and hour by hour, a full and satisfactory account of what those agents are doing or designing for the happiness and well-being of the people committed to their charge. Interests far less momentous than those of India have hitherto enjoyed a far larger share of parliamentary consideration. It is useless to begin reforming our Indian policy without being sufficiently fore-armed against all chance of failure at the outset. The evil to be dealt with, should be dealt with effectually or not

at all. The least atonement we can render for past neglect and misrule in the case of India is, to provide her with the best possible security against similar mishaps hereafter. Such a provision would not be far to seek, or difficult to apply when found. A standing Parliamentary Commission, made up of able, active, disinterested men such as England has never yet failed to supply for public purposes, might be got ready at a moment's warning to assume, with better capacity and higher aims, the functions hitherto discharged with such little credit by the Board of Control on the one hand and the periodical committees on the other. It would take up but a small fraction of our statesmen's time to select from their ranks a certain number of fit commissioners entrusted, on certain fit and wholesome conditions, with the power to watch, examine, and report upon all that passes in the world of Indian politics; to inspire, control, and modify the movements of its upper and outer circles; to counteract whatever of wrong or mischievous may issue from the depths of its official mechanism; and to initiate whatever of just or expedient may be wanting to complete the ends for which that mechanism was first designed.

The advantages of such a measure, properly planned and carefully carried out, would be great and manifold enough. Indian affairs have got into a sad state of entanglement and unrepair during these late years. The present is a very critical moment in the life of British India. More than ever does she now stand in need of wise counsel and active help on the part of her imperial mistress. More than ever is the latter bounden now to accord that help and impart that counsel with the freest grace and the best ability. For such ends no better road seems open to her than the road we have just been dimly pointing out. Instead of the vicious system which now prevails, we should thereby get to a system of checks and balances so simple as to admit of working with fewer hands for longer periods, yet so nicely arranged that each would best fulfil its particular functions by advancing the common interest which should inspire them all. Instead of half a dozen bodies possessed of indiscriminate powers, working each on different principles, pulling each a different way, we should have one able deliberative body at home representing the hopes and interests of the Indian people, but controlled in its turn and continually overlooked by an able initiative body, chosen by and out of the British parliament to express the feelings and maintain the credit of the whole British nation. Two such bodies, working in due concert as they would surely do for a common end, would soon make their influence felt in many notable ways through every public road and hidden byeway of their common empire. Their joint exertions would erelong pave the way to all those ulterior measures of internal reform which are now lying in such very dim perspective on the political horizon of British India.

The effect of such an arrangement would not be confined to India alone. It would extend in no little measure to England also.

While pushing their inquiries into the various departments of Indian politics, our new commissioners would be laying up fresh incentives to increased exertion and heightened watchfulness in the mass of new and varied materials, which their researches would continually be opening out for the use and enlightenment of their countrymen at large, and their fellow legislators in particular. The longer they pursued their labors, the greater conversance would these latter acquire with the ground over which those labors had been or would still have to be pursued. Englishmen would soon cease to look on India as a country with which they had no immediate concern. British apathy would soon be rousing itself perforce to survey the scope and apply the lessons of a new regenerative power, whose constant pressure and increasing growth would cause British ignorance to look more and more foolish, ugly, and disreputable day by day. A debate in Parliament on this or that Indian question would be somewhat livelier and more profitable than such a spectacle has hitherto been. British statesmen would have to grow ashamed of knowing as little about Eastern politics as an Indian ryot is likely to know about those of Timbuctoo, or a Russian serf about those of Kentucky. The Hoggs and Hobhouses would cease to smile with conscious triumph at the narcotic effects of a philippic by Anstey, or the futile effects of an eloquent partisan address to empty benches by Lord Ellenborough. Most points of Indian policy, such as the Afghan War or the Conquest of Scinde, would get decided on their true merits, instead of being quietly smothered by reference to a garbled Blue Book, or coolly set aside by one of those barefaced subterfuges or bold assumptions, with which some of our political jugglers have contrived so often to mystify and mislead the minds of honester men. As the railway in some measure creates its own traffic, so will the formation of a standing Indian Commission create in due time the needful supply of candidates for the honor of filling its future vacancies. Conversance with Indian affairs must erelong become the general rule of a Parliament whose members would of course be all eligible alike to take their turn at a service peculiarly adapted for Parliamentary hands alone. And public opinion, as it became more enlightened, would become more capable of discharging its lawful mission as an embodied reality, a wise and active will, ever aiming to express and enforce the dictates of human justice, mercy, self-respect; ever ready to espouse the interests and assert the rights of all whom its aid may benefit or its voice encourage; ever forward to rebuke, browbeat, chastise in rather a tremendous way the wrongdoers, fools, and evil-minded who have dared to pursue their hateful practices under its immediate ken. Surely such a prospect would be worth the realising, even at tenfold the risk and trouble needed for its realisation now.

These preliminary steps once taken, the road beyond them would prove comparatively passable and easy to follow out. A better system of external government at home would lead as a matter of course to the adoption

of a better system of internal government in India. In due time the one result would necessarily induce the other. The march of knowledge cannot be arrested at will. It were as easy to stay the hand of Time itself. Once fairly roused to the need for action and enlightened as to the proper channel for its display, the national mind of England will not be satisfied with any partial solution of the difficulty with which it began to grapple in so hopeful a way. It will insist on getting to the bottom of a mystery which seems to grow more and more intelligible at every step. Once set upon a trail so broad and promising, the public attention would refuse to turn from it half-way. For such obstacles as would chiefly beset its path, it would have little care and less sympathy to plead in excuse of any long delay. What of obsolete charters, vested interests, prescriptive rights, unjust monopolies, private trespasses of any sort on public ground, appeared to dispute its passage, would certainly have to remove themselves or get rudely trampled upon in due time. Sooner or later the quarry would be hunted down, no matter what cunning fences and elaborate pleas were devised to quench the zeal and baffle the watchfulness of the pursuers.

To all who regard our Indian government with careful and unprejudiced eyes, the general results of its domestic policy must seem more or less incompatible with the present state, character, and capabilities of our Anglo-Indian community at large. The two conditions have somehow lost their due parallelism. Only by a swift and sweeping change in the former can the difference between them be fairly adjusted. Without some large measure of internal reform India must look in vain to thrive better than she is doing now. Such conclusions may be laughed or sneered at in many quarters. They may be called by all manner of hard names. Their upholders may be continually set down as fools or knaves, as bold enthusiasts or bold impostors. Blind conservatism and blinder factiousness may do much to distort for others the truths they cannot see themselves. The voice of Mammon may join loudly enough in the laugh or diatribe against men whose watchword is in itself a standing protest against the Mammonism of former days. The thoughtless and uninformed may be slow to admit the justness of a movement whose antecedents they are unwilling to believe. But the conclusions themselves are not to be wholly rejected or explicitly denied by any one. The boldest advocates of present abuses dare not insist on keeping all things precisely as they are. The fondest worshippers of India House patronage will yet allow the need for administrative repairs in Bengal, or confess that there is something rotten in the financial circumstances of Madras. The most bigoted defenders of the Civil Service will yet have the candour to bewail the demoralized state and indisciplined tendencies of our Indian Army. Peculiarly sharp in their own limited sphere are the eyes of such as Daniel of Calcutta. According to this reverend reasoner the crying wants of India at this moment would be remedied by the institution of another Anglican Bishopric at Agra. Others hardly less inge-

nious would rest India's hopes and happiness for the future on the despatch of an additional cargo of civilians from Haileybury, or Missionaries from Exeter Hall. So much seriousness over comparative trifles will not be without its deeper meaning for those who can duly appreciate the conditions of its display. Such zeal for cleansing the outside of the cup and platter reads, to our thinking, like the expression of a resolute if not very becoming desire to slur over the rottenness which reigns within.

Crying wants indeed there are; grave abuses and grave defects which call for remedy, but not for remedies so weak and questionable as these. The main features of our local polity are not to be studied by the farthing lights of professional arrogance and religious bigotry. The great questions of local reform must be argued on higher grounds than those of antiquated usage and party privilege. Wilful blindness and ignorant presumption are rather treacherous guides in the search for grievances of their own producing. The powers of darkness will lend no willing hand to the disinterment of a forgotten truth or the suppression of a long rampant falsehood. Only to those who study it in a spirit of calm candid unflinching injury and large right-minded purpose, will the present phase of Anglo-Indian affairs, reveal itself in its true characters and full significance, disrobed of all its theoretical pretences, and pleading to be judged no longer by crooked and exceptional rules, but by the everlasting laws of justice, honesty, fine feeling, and common sense. Only to those who search for them with clear eyes and honest hearts will the true results of our past policy become fairly distinguishable through the heap of falsehoods, fallacies, prejudices, misconceptions, with which they have continually been overlaid.

On those results we cannot expatiate now. Want of space precludes more than a passing allusion to them. That they are results to grieve at rather than to rejoice over, no one who has used his eyes to any purpose can venture to deny. A system essentially unsound and full of anomalies must work with damaging effect under any circumstances. This has been remarkably the case with India. Faulty theory has led to worse practice. The whole tendency of our civil legislation is to protect the few at the expense of the many. A few hundred friends and relatives of the East India Directors possess to all intents supreme and unlimited control over the lives and fortunes of the whole Anglo-Indian community. Under the grossest of all monopolies, under the most galling form of foreign dominion, have the natives of India been doomed to suffer unnoticed for these many generations past. Year after year have they seen youths from Haileybury seated in all their high places, usurping functions which many of their own party would have filled with better grace, dispensing justice, administering the laws, finances, politics of large districts with the easy confidence of practised veterans, and drawing salaries more accordant with their youthful tastes than suited to the extent of their professional acquirements. While these men have been so highly favored,

their ill-paid and hard-working brethren of the uncovenanted service are still fain to toil and struggle in a subordinate sphere, without a hope of rising beyond a certain point in the path which professedly lies open to all classes and colors alike. In theory we have placed the native on a level with his white comrade in respect of political as well as social rights. In practice we are still doing our worst to keep him down by disabilities and enactments affecting both the one and the other. In giving him place and pay we have forgotten to square the latter with the new conditions involved in the former. Raising him to a position of peculiar trial we expect him to fill it worthily and without offence, upon a salary which no respectable native would deem anything like adequate to the accompanying duties, still less to the accompanying dangers. By way of raising the native character, we hold out a premium for vice and dishonesty which tends to sink it lower and lower every day. The low-caste corrupt vakeel continues his career of mischief as a corrupt magistrate; and the abuse we have thus engendered, becomes convertible into a fresh excuse for excluding the native from places of yet higher trust and wider influence. By way of enforcing the social equality of all classes, we exempt our English countrymen in the mofussil, by special clauses and technical evasions from the due jurisdiction of our established courts. Our criminal proceedings are too often a notorious farce. Our civil judicature has become a bye-word for feebleness, inconsistency, rash judgments, needless delays, unjust and arbitrary practices of every sort. Our civil law is a mystery which its wisest interpreters cannot altogether expound; a luxury in which the mass of natives would rather not indulge at any cost. Bengal is blessed with a police more powerful foren couraging than for checking crime. A large part of India is blessed with a fiscal system which seems fast reducing the landed classes to one common level of poverty, thriftlessness, and mental stagnation. All India rejoices under a salt-tax framed in the very worst school of political economy, and carrying out to its fatalest and ugliest issue the atrocious principle of sacrificing the many for the virtual benefit of the few by a heavy tax upon the commonest necessaries of human life. It is only since yesterday that a partial remedy has at length been ordained for the defects of a postal system as disgraceful to our national character, as it is burthensome to the public and unjust to the press of India.

Our whole scheme of fiscal policy needs revising at an early date. It is impossible that a revenue in itself so small, and more than two-thirds of which are drawn from land alone, can fairly represent the existing wealth and known resources of a country so large, populous, and civilised as India. According to the present scheme the wealth of our mercantile and monied classes remains untouched, while the landed gentry contribute to the public purse a proportion of their own yearly incomes, large enough in due time to break the backs of the finest agricultural body in the world. Numbers of

these and their dependents have already sunk into utter ruin beneath a burden which there are plenty of fat 'mahajans' and greasy 'bunneahs' able, if not very willing, to share. Austria is not remarkable for the extent of her resources, agricultural or commercial. Yet even with her huge armies to be maintained, her land-tax amounts only to a third of her yearly revenue. In England the proportion has fallen as low as two per cent. Why sixty-five per cent. should still be the rule for India, with her wealthy merchants, impoverished land-owners, and accumulating debt, we must leave the Court of Directors to explain.

These are serious evils, needing most of them to be remedied soon. But the process under any circumstances will needs be somewhat slow. It is good for us to hope the best. Meanwhile there are some sins of omission, some mistakes of a minor sort, which our rulers would do well to begin repairing at once. The wealth of India and her people has yet to be fairly explored. The resources of either have only just begun to put out their first blossoms. It is for us to see that they shall bring forth fruit abundantly in due season. Hitherto we have but played at building bridges, making roads, and founding schools. For very shame must we now go to work in rather a more earnest and wholesale fashion. A large field of enterprise and well-doing lies before us entreating our attention to it in many significant ways. The raw material for our future labors discloses itself on every hand. It needs but a little effort of well-timed and munificent zeal to verify in literal prose the old poetic allusions to "the wealth of Ind." In the broad wastes and neglected marshes of Central and Southern India, as in the boundless forests which gird the Himalayas, British capital and British energy will find an ample and yet unoccupied field for the development of untold resources and the production of material wealth, by methods hitherto unknown, untried, or tried unskilfully. The forests of Rohilcund offer rich stores of appropriate fuel for working the crude produce of those iron mines which have lain so long unnoticed below. The cotton fields of India may yet divert a portion of the profits hitherto monopolised by America. The opening of new channels for trade and labor must tend to create for her children new incentives to mental industry and moral progress, as surely as it will tend to multiply the sources and safeguards of their material well-being. Let the Government of India but ordain the preliminary process, and they will find it all the less difficult to help out the ulterior results. India is still but a child in several respects. For a time at least her present rulers must continue to do for her, what nations intellectually older can be trusted to get done for themselves.

There are powerful agents ready to join them in forwarding the common cause. Missionaries and additional bishops were never yet found competent to arrest a social Juggernauth, or force on a moral Avatar, with their own unaided hands. Not by formal preachings or metaphysical babblements, not by parrot like rehearsals of Shakespere or childish commentaries on Ba-

con, nor yet by heaven-born statesmanship direct from Haileybury, can the work of educating the people of India get itself advanced in any visible degree. The native mind is not to be thus enlightened. It needs training of a far more practical kind; pressure far more active, universal, continuous, by means of arguments appealing to the senses rather than arguments speaking directly to the soul. A wise and paternal Government will make the most of the tools most readily available for effecting its purpose in the shortest time. Just laws, free institutions, good roads, an efficient police, a comprehensive and liberal scheme of popular instruction, whatever tends in short to encourage the growth of civilized tendencies and enlightened views, will gather far more proselytes to the cause of spiritual and intellectual freedom than all the wisest precepts of the greatest religious teachers. In the Press, the Railway, the Electric Telegraph, are we to recognise the accredited agents, the inspired apostles and trusted missionaries, the veritable priests and preachers, rites, ordinances, and daily lessons, of that time-old creed which alone may tend to dispel the darkness of national barbarism. It is only by these and such-like influences that the great heart of Indian humanity will ever be moved effectually, if it is ever to be moved at all.

Speculation on the future would be an idle task at this distance from the centre of present disturbance. But there is much cheerful significance in the tidings which continually reach this country anent the increasing stir and widened sympathy which this question of Indian Government has begun evoking, even at the eleventh hour among our countrymen at home. With all its talents and popularity, the present ministry has already damaged its personal credit by its rash and unwarrantable comments on the results of an enquiry which has scarcely got beyond its preliminary stage. To those comments the answer given was plain enough. It showed Her Majesty's advisers the necessity of thinking again, before they ventured to insult the people of England with a mere renewal of the legislative tricks and falsehoods heretofore in vogue, whenever the affairs of British India were brought upon the public boards. We trust they have taken the hint to some good purpose. For their own sakes, if for no higher consideration, are they bound to act honestly by the nation at large, in a matter which the nation at large will insist on probing further, no matter what powers of indolence, talent, or privilege may attempt to bar its way. Justice to India is the cry no longer of a mere party, but of all parties alike. If Her Majesty's advisers should still think otherwise, they will venture to act accordingly at their peril.

L. T.

THE BOX OF LETTERS.

Many years ago I was deputed by the Government to take charge of the office of a member of the Civil Service, who had died suddenly. He was a man of the old school, who had vegetated in India uninterruptedly for more than a quarter of a century, who had broken through all English ties, and set at defiance many of the better English habits. He had risen high in rank, and had obtained some estimation for official ability, but the heart that could disregard the natural ties of relationship, was not likely to draw to itself new and sincere friendships. He had lived very much to himself, and by himself, and when he died, no one regretted it. There was rather a feeling of satisfaction among his juniors, that death had at length removed this permanent obstacle to their promotion.

I received charge of his private effects as well as his office, and a strange meleé of things they consisted of, for the deceased had left England during the last century, and had never returned to refreshen his ideas, and had never broken up his establishment: a great mass of rubbish therefore had accumulated, which for years past he had been too indolent either to look at or think of.

A few months after I received from a solicitor in London an application, urging and imploring me to make search for a particular document which was supposed to be among the letters of the deceased, and which was of the greatest importance to his heirs, if produced at once. It appears that these heirs were great nephews who had never seen, and only faintly heard, of their Indian Uncle. They had become aware of his death from the papers, and had become entitled to a landed estate, supposing a document could be produced, and they earnestly solicited me, though a stranger, to make a search for it, and should it not be found, they authorized, nay, entreated me to read every letter received in days bygone from his family, on the chance of some trace being found of it.

I complied unwillingly to what appeared to me to be a very dull task,—one very repugnant to my feelings, and for which I had little leisure or eyesight. However, one evening I opened the box in which I had previously sealed up all the private papers, and began with much ennui and ill-will what seemed a very heavy task; but strange to say, as I read, an unexpected interest began to seize me. I found in these letters a history of the deceased's domestic relatives for the last fifty years, all the joys and sorrows of his home told artlessly, and rising up unadvisedly more fascinating than many a studied romance. The work occupied me many nights, but I forgot the fatigue, and oftentimes I was so deeply interested that I read on insensibly past the midnight hour.

The letters were tied up in packets, and the first that came under my eyes, contained the

letters of his father, written in a round, old-fashioned hand, with all the indications of being the work of a gentleman of the old school, such as we hear of in the reign of the Third George. From the first to the last they commenced "My dear Boy," and so faithfully had they been treasured and arranged, that the first on the file were written to the deceased, when he was at a public school. Full were they of "old saws and modern instances" of warnings, kindly admonitions, announcing some projected pleasure, or forwarding some parental present. By degrees the plans for the future life of the boy began to be discussed—the dreadful word India was first placed before his eyes: the expressions were brief but affectionate: the old man clearly did not like to condemn his son to banishment, but could not conceal from him the offer. The series with English post-marks then ceased, and a year after commenced with Indian directions. In some of the last the bold hand began to tremble, the letters were shaky. At length, at one period many years ago, the series abruptly closed, and labelled on the last, which stood on the top of the packet, were the significant words "My poor dear Father."

Hard by was a large bundle, or rather succession of bundles, written in a female hand: it was not difficult to divine who had written them, for they commenced at a much earlier date than those of his father, and some of them were written, in large uncial characters, to catch the eye of a child. How deeply and clearly did maternal love speak out in all this! How the notes of this early period brought before me the imaginary writer in all the pride and fervency of the young mother! Her kind and thoughtful watchings over her darling boy, her gentle admonitions, her steady support in his difficulties, ever ready to befriend, to counsel, to caution for his health, to warn for his future. I traced the boy from the small school to the great public institution: the letters, though written by the same person, indicated by the change of time and style, the improvement and development of the mind of the receiver, constant, unbroken, often alluding gently to neglect of answers, but never reproaching, supplying to the absent school-boy the little incidents of his home, telling him of the health of his poney, and the care taken of his garden. All the boy in his many phases stood before me: I saw his joyful face, as he opened and read the short note, telling him on what day the carriage would meet him to bring him home for the holidays: and I pictured the tearful eye with which the first letter was received after his returning to school, telling him, and oh how truly! how much he was missed. I began to know his brothers and sisters by name. Soon the fact began to grow upon me, that his second sister was sickening, and would not long live. I read that in the mother's cautious phrases, but the boy, amidst his lessons and his cricket, little heeded them, till one letter came to convey him his first sorrow, and tell him that his earliest playfellow was dead: all the details were given such as a mother's pen only can give them: all the little symptoms, the strug-

gle of hope and fear, the opinion of the Doctor, the trust in God's mercy: then came the last moment, the last words of the dying angel, the thoughtful message of love to the dear and absent brother, the "God's will be done" of the heart-broken parent.

All this I read, till I could read no more: it was a page of domestic history that must have been known to all of us. I had become so identified with the family, so interested in the poor sufferer, I had so connected her with some lost loved one of my own circle, that I, a hardened man, when I reached this crisis, rose up from my seat overpowered, and wept aloud at the account of the last moments of a young girl of some sixteen summers, who had died years ago before I was even born, of whom I had known, and till that evening heard nothing. So strange and deep-seated is the chord of human sympathy.

For many years afterwards the letters of the mother were tinged with gloom and melancholy resignation: the blow had gone home to the heart, and all the mother was poured out in every letter. Whatever was the subject, constant allusions to the lost child would force themselves in: hopes, that the darling boy might never forget his sister; prayers, that he might be like her, and in the days of his youth remember His Creator. Even the joyful tidings of the happy marriage of the elder daughter could not tear away *her* thoughts from the Church-yard corner, where green turf and bright flowers bloomed over the grave of the Early Dead.

But the stream of Life could not be stayed; it flowed unceasingly on; the boy became a man; Love began to take the place of Authority; the Teacher gave way to the Friend, and the tone of the letters was altered: then came the first mention of abhorred India, the mournful anticipations too truly realized: the trusting in Providence, and then a great blank in the correspondence.

The boy had indeed become a man, the man had been doomed to exile,—in his case eternal. There were no Overland Mails then, ship letters came few and far between; yet, when they did come, what an out-pouring of motherly love was contained in those closely-written and crossed pages! Not a hasty scrawl written on the day previous to the departing vessel, with empty apologies for premeditated carelessness, but a minute chronicle of Home, a record of events renewed day by day, and as year followed year, and letter followed at long intervals letter, an expression of hopes and wishes, a participation of doubts and anxieties. I soon gathered that the old man's health was failing, that he yearned to see his son after a ten years' absence, for the dates told me that that time had now passed, that he grew weaker day by day; the letters told me how very near that return was to the mother's heart. How could the son coldly listen to such appeals? What newly-formed ties, what professional ambition, what foolish, short-sighted love of lucre tempted him to delay his return? I knew that he never had re-visited his home, and I believe that he never had intended; but for two long years the letters of his mother were written with new hope,

dwelling on some promises expressed or implied, for in the autumn she was expecting him with the spring, and when spring came she was building palaces of delight for the future autumn. *But he never returned!* Oh! ask not the cause, blame him not, let each look at home, and remember that the duties that they owe to their parents are paramount, and must not be delayed. How heavy must have fallen the news on the son, when he saw the black seal, when he read that the old man was dead? Did not tears, bitter, scalding tears, of anguish and reproach, blister the paper, when his mother's trembling characters told him that his father had sickened, how he had died peacefully, bequeathing his benediction to his absent boy, how he had gratefully, with expiring accents, thanked heaven for many blessings, and would not allow himself to murmur, if one only, that of seeing his son again, had been denied. Of what value at that moment to that son were his ephemeral honours, what booted his hoarded treasure, that had prevented his return? Did not that lock of grey hair, now all that remained to him of his first and dearest friend, reproach him, that he had allowed that honored head to descend to the grave with one wish unfulfilled, which a son might have gratified?

The powers of the widowed mother now seemed shaken: her letters never failed, but became shorter, were as full of thoughtful love, as they had been thirty years before: new names were alluded to as taking place in the family circle, the old house had been vacated, the seat under the stately elms, where he had often sat at his mother's feet, listening to the cawing of the rooks, was vacant; the churchyard grave was no longer visited; all past associations were gone. The twentieth year of exile had now elapsed, and the mother had left off sighing for, or alluding to her son's return; she was content that he prospered. A new race of people had sprung up unknown to him, and his sister's children had arrived at maturity. They were known to him only by report, and though their hands filled up the vacancies of their grandmother's letters, they wrote as strangers. His own third sister, whom he had left in the cradle a baby, was now described as in blooming womanhood; many a gentle allusion fell from the mother's pen, to attract the brother's affection to this unknown sister, by describing her beauty, and her resemblance to that lost sister of his childhood, who had now been mouldering a quarter of a century in the deserted Church-yard, and by all but the mother, had long been forgotten.

I had begun to love and venerate this good old lady; my hand trembled as I took up each letter, fearing not to see the same handwriting beneath: I saw too that I was approaching the last of the bundle, and I knew that must mean death, for such love ceases not this side of the grave. I seemed to have known her for years; I remembered her as the young mother writing her first letters to her schoolboy; I remembered her pale countenance over the grave of her child; I contrasted that blooming matron, as when she bade him farewell, with the stiff, upright figure in the old arm-chair, with the pic-

ture of her son hanging before her—her son, as he had left her, in sanguine youth, full of bright hopes, good resolutions, and warm affections, in the morning of his career. And did he not return home even then to throw himself at the feet of this injured parent, (for what greater injury than love unreturned ?) Did he not tear himself away from his oriental ties to repay so many years of unchanging affection ? Will a few shawls and Indian nicknacks, the cold display of heedless affluence, gratify a mother's yearning ? Can the heart become so cold ? Can the first duties of Nature be so easily forgotten ? I had never loved this man, but until I read these letters, I had somewhat respected him, but I felt now burning with indignation, as if personally wronged, nor would I, fearing an avenging Providence, have trusted myself in the same vessel with one so regardless of the ties of humanity.

I said that but a few letters remained. They were short, cheerful, and resigned, thanking him for some present, inquiring tenderly after his health, but never alluding to his return, or his future. The mother had divined the secret : some kind friend had told to her the Indian tale. That silence, when contrasted with the warm anticipations and eager hopes of the past, cut me deepest. Her last letter was dated forty years after the first : the hand-writing had changed but little, the signature almost the same, and the same true tone of unchanging womanly love, the same unselfish outpouring of maternal care showed itself throughout the whole correspondence. True to herself, true to her principles, in a long series of several hundred letters, there was nothing that on reperusal he could have wished to have expunged : had the whole been published, each reader would have recognized the type of a Christian English mother.

I had almost forgotten the object of my search, and the urgent reasons which had privileged me to violate these sacred pages. Having finished these interesting packets, I had to wade through a vast miscellaneous mass of correspondence : letters from his sisters, letters from his nieces and his nephews, from his lawyers in England, from his friends and acquaintances in India : there was the acknowledgment of the sporting Major, who had plundered him at the card-table, or done him on the race course : there was the note of apology from the youngster who had broken the knees of the horse, which had been lent to him by his good-natured and careless host : there were the duns, and the applications, the whinings of Misery, and the fawnings of Sycophantism : what a strange picture of the world is offered by a box of miscellaneous correspondence extending over many years : I found letters written in the freshness and confidence of boyhood by men, whom I knew now in the surliness and misanthropism of decaying years :—the extravagant of those days had become misers—the Saints of the last century had furnished the present with sinners. Names of old fogies who had long since been transferred from the staff of the Army to the list of the Pension Paymaster and the Sexton, were here alluded to, as smart officers with

reference to the purchase of Companies: old Sudder Judges, who had years ago gone to that place where all Sudder Judges go, and the sooner the better, in these pages appeared as men of sense and intelligence, for which I had never given them credit. I read on with varied interest, sometimes a smile, and sometimes a sigh, and at the bottom of all my attention was once more arrested by a small packet in a delicate female hand, and the contents told the old tale of an early engagement ending, as usual, in moonshine. The correspondence had commenced at a very distant period before even the departure of India, and for two or three years the series was regular, abounding with the usual trite, school girl remarks of undying affection, and anticipated happiness; there was no clue to the name, as initials only were used, and one day thirty years ago this correspondence had ceased, why, it was impossible to divine; for the last letter was as fervent as the first. This was not a case of love perishing by slow decay, but a sudden wrench of hearts, and I sat some time wondering how it had come to pass, whether death, or kind friends had interfered, whether she still lived, whether the sight of *his* name among the dead had secured one only tear for the grave of her old Indian lover.

But why were his days doomed to terminate in this way? Why did he not return to his home to reap the rewards of his youth and manhood spent in intellectual and honourable labour? Lax in morals, unsettled in religion, effeminate in habits, imperious in manner, antiquated in notions, and narrow in views, why did he tarry here at length to creep to an obscure grave unloveable, unloving, and, since that one fond maternal heart had ceased to beat, unloved?

PHILO-INDUS.

HISTORY OF THE LEAGUE.

CHAPTER V.

Treaty of Joinville.—Manifesto of the Leaguers.—Proclamation of Henry III.—Manifesto of the King of Navarre.—Treaty of Nemours.—Death of Gregory XIII.—Election of Sixte-Quint.—His Bull of Excommunication.—Castle of Angers surprised.—Bout of the Prince of Condé.—General Operations.

1584.—Finding every thing thus ripe for the full development of his schemes, the Duke of Guise withdrew towards the close of the year to his government of Champagne, and shortly afterwards proceeded to Joinville, where a treaty was signed by the Envoy of the Spanish monarch on the one hand, and on the other by the representatives of the Holy League. The avowed object was to secure by arms the succession to the Cardinal of Bourbon, and for ever to exclude all the princes who were heretics, or abettors of heresy, much more those who had apostatized from the true faith. The Cardinal pledged himself, on ascending the throne, to ratify the treaty of Câteau-Cambresis, which abandoned to Spain the sole government of Flanders, to surrender the town of Cambray, to renounce all alliances with the Grand Seignior, to forbid all enterprizes against the Spanish Indies, to assist in subduing the revolted provinces of the Netherlands, and to proclaim the Council of Trent. On these conditions Philip II. promised to furnish 50,000 crowns a month for the expences of the war, and to settle on the Duke an annual pension of 200,000 crowns. The contracting parties further agreed not to conclude peace without their mutual consent.

1585.—Father Claude Matthieu—from his frequent journies surnamed the Courier of the League—immediately set out for Rome with a copy of this most treasonable document, in order to obtain the Pope's sanction, which in a war undertaken ostensibly for religious motives, was almost indispensable. Gregory XIII., however, being unable to comprehend the precise object of the League—for the bigotry of Henry III. was too unquestionable to admit the supposition that he in any way favoured the heretics—determined to temporize, and therefore referred the matter to a congregation of Cardinals, who left it in as great obscurity as before, adding to their resolution on each separate article, the ambiguous but saving clause, "if the facts stated be true." A little before his death he is reported to have said to Cardinal D'Este: "The League shall have from me neither Bull nor Brief, until I see more clearly into its entangled web."

It had been originally agreed that the Treaty of Joinville should be kept secret for a time, but Philip now became alarmed lest Henry III. should accede to the proposition of the States, and consent to take the Netherlands under his protection. The Earl of Warwick, accompanied by a magnificent suite, had lately been commission-

ed by Elizabeth to convey the Insignia of the Order of the Garter to the King of France, but it was well known that he had been secretly instructed to urge Henry to aid the Flemings, and to undertake on the part of his royal mistress to defray one-third of the charges. The Spanish Ambassador therefore protested in strong terms against the King's interference in favor of rebels, and even added some threats. On which Henry replied with the dignity he could sometimes assume, that neither he nor any other monarch of France would ever be deterred by menaces from aiding the oppressed, and that as he had always kept up a friendly intercourse with the Belgians, he should continue to afford a hospitable asylum to all their fugitives. Unhappily his actions did not correspond with his words, and he declined for the present to entertain the petition of the supplicants. His interposition would at this moment have turned the scale, and civil and religious liberty would probably have been secured to the Low Countries. The Prince of Parma was then engaged with the siege of Antwerp, on the fate of which mainly depended the fortune of the war. Philip II. was so sensible of the emergency of the crisis, that he called upon the Duke of Guise immediately to fulfil his promises, threatening in case of refusal to acquaint the King with their infamous pact, and to abandon the cause of the League for ever. The Duke, however, was but ill prepared to commence hostilities. By means of Spanish gold he had indeed gained over Louis Phiffer, the President of the Five Cantons, and had also despatched Christopher de Bassompierre into Germany to raise an auxiliary corps of Reiters, but some time must necessarily elapse before he could expect the arrival of troops from either of these quarters. Nevertheless, to retain the favor and support of the King of Spain, it was deemed expedient to incur all hazards.

The Cardinal of Bourbon accordingly left Paris for Rouen under pretext of passing the season of Lent in his own diocese, and thence hastened into Picardy, on the frontiers of which he was met by the Dukes of Guise, Mayenne, Aumale, and Elboeuf, and conducted with much ceremony to Peronne. Here he signed a Manifesto—dated the 13th of March—which had been already drawn up and prepared by abler hands. It stated that for fourteen years France had been a prey to a dangerous war, that threatened the very existence of true religion. Many remedies had been applied, but so inefficiently, that they rather added fuel to the flame. Of the numerous sons of Henry II. the present King alone survived, and as he had no apparent hope of any issue, great disorders might be expected to ensue at his death. For ever during his life time these rebels against the Church had made preparations for war, and had concluded treaties with foreign and heretical Princes. Some Catholics even had afforded them protection, and abused the royal confidence in order to forward their own selfish views. These traitors to God and their country had removed from the King's person all the Princes and great lords, and had deprived them of

all real power, and left them only a vain title. They had besides bestowed every office and honour on their own creatures, and had oppressed the people by excessive taxation, while they appropriated to their own use, the funds of the public treasury. For these reasons, the Cardinal, as first Prince of the blood, conjointly with the other Princes of the blood-royal, Cardinals, Peers, Prelates, Lords, &c. &c., "the best and soundest portion of this realm," after due deliberation have mutually promised and sworn to take up arms, in order that the Holy Church of God may be restored to its pristine lustre, and the one true Catholic religion alone be professed throughout the kingdom. They have further engaged that the Nobles shall recover all their privileges, that the people shall be freed from all taxes imposed since the reign of Charles IX., that the States shall be convoked every three years, and the Parliaments be reintegrated in their former power. They further disclaimed all interested motives, and professed their readiness to lay down their arms as soon as the King had acceded to their just demands, for their only object was the preservation of himself and his kingdom. All towns, corporations and individuals who had not yet signed the articles of the League, were urged to lose no time to repair their negligence, lest they too should be numbered among the evil-doers. Finally, they declared their intention not wilfully to injure either the persons or property of true Catholics, but to preserve the strictest discipline, and to persevere until every object was attained. Rather than consent to a fruitless peace they were prepared generously to sacrifice their lives and all their worldly goods, and to be heaped together under one tomb, erected to the memory of the "Last of the French, who died in fighting for their God and their native land." This declaration concluded with the royal form: Given at Peronne, &c. &c., and was signed, Charles, Cardinal de Bourbon. The Duke of Guise immediately afterwards took the field, and surprised Toul and Verdun, but sustained a repulse under the walls of Metz, into which the Duke of Epernon had thrown considerable succours. He then proceeded to Chalons where he proposed to fix the head-quarters of the League, and resolved to await there the arrival of his foreign auxiliaries.

In the meantime the King lost the favorable moment for action by his indecision, and at first contented himself with making pious processions in the hope of obtaining children. But when the Manifesto of the Cardinal appeared, he recognized the necessity of adopting measures of more speedy operation. Some of his counsellors urged him to attach the King of Navarre to his cause, but others—with whom was the Queen-mother—represented that this would at once confirm the insinuations of his enemies, and would tend to alienate the few good Catholics who still remained loyal to their sovereign. Marshal D'Aumont implored Henry to allow him to march at the head of the guards and such other troops as he could hastily collect, and to crush the Leaguers

before any re-inforcements could reach them. This indeed would have proved no very difficult task, for Beauvais-Nangis, on his arrival at Châlons, found the Duke with only 400 foot and 1500 horse. To his inquiry how he proposed to act if the royalists marched against him, Guise coolly replied, that he must in that case flee into Germany, and await a better opportunity. But it was not Catherine's policy to permit the humiliation of the House of Lorraine, and she therefore persuaded the King to endeavour to gain time by negotiating with both parties, Huguenots and Leaguers. In accordance with this treacherous advice, Henry issued an edict to forbid the levying of troops unless by his express command, and enjoining all governors, lieutenant-governors, bailiffs, and seneschals to oppose all such illegal measures by assembling the inhabitants of their respective districts by sound of tocsin, and cutting in pieces all who resist their authority. He also gave orders to raise a body of Swiss auxiliaries, and despatched Count Schomberg into Germany to obtain a corps of Reiters; but on his passage through Lorraine the Count was arrested by the sovereign prince of that province, who, finding that his son was likely to benefit by the commotions that agitated France, had at last pronounced himself in favor of the League. He trusted, besides, to get possession of the three Bishoprics of Toul, Verdun, and Metz, originally free imperial cities under the protection of the Duchy of Lorraine, but annexed to the French Crown by Henry II. in 1552.

The League had already made considerable progress. Mandelot had seized and razed to the ground the Citadel of Lyons: La Chatre delivered up Bourges: Brissac induced Angers to declare for Henry of Guise: and D'Entragues was equally successful at Orleans. But the royalists retained their influence in Bordeaux, through the energy and soldierly conduct of Marshal Matignon, who repressed the disturbance at its outbreak, and having strengthened the fort of Château-Trompette, was enabled to keep the town under proper control until the termination of the war. Some lamentable excesses occurred at Marseilles, which certain seditious persons endeavoured to deliver up to the Duke of Nevers, at that moment in the immediate neighbourhood. But the firmness and good sense of a respectable citizen named Bouqiner, and the prompt arrival of the Grand Prior of France, checked the progress of the tumult, and the ringleaders having suffered the meed of their misdeeds, peace was speedily restored. The Duke of Nevers about the same time abandoned the League, and assigned as his reason, that he had been misled as to its motives: for he had been assured that it had received the sanction of the Pope, and was solely aimed at the extirpation of heresy, whereas it now appeared that the Pontiff withheld his approval, and the arms of the Leaguers had been directed only against their sovereign. In Brittany the Duke of Montpensier, acting in conformity to the King's orders, easily dispersed Mercœur's raw and ill-disciplined levies, as did Joyeuse those of the Duke of Elboeuf. A serious illness had hi-

therto confined the Duke of Epernon to his couch, but as soon as he was able to rise, he fell upon the League troops with impetuosity and cut them to pieces. Many sincere Catholics now imitated the example of the Duke of Nevers, but Henry III. was inaccessible to encouragement, and towards the end of April published a long, verbose, and apologetic declaration, in which he rather sought to justify his own conduct than to mark that of the rebels with due reprobation. After expressing his displeasure that some of his subjects should have entered into a confederacy professing indeed to have plausible objects in view, but resorting to very illegal means to carry them out, he asks why it should be necessary thus to isolate himself, when his sympathy with their avowed cause was so well known. He was convinced by experience that the heretics could never be put down by force of arms, and yet he would have undertaken hostilities against them to gratify his people, had the States afforded him sufficient funds. Great advantages, however, had accrued to the nation in consequence of peace, and the Clergy had been permitted to hold Provincial Synods to confer about the best means of reforming the discipline of the Church. He himself had not only sent commissions into various parts of the country to administer justice on the spot, but had suppressed numerous sinecures, and prohibited all venality at Court, besides setting in his own person a bright example of piety and godliness. Malignity and corrupt manners alone could have misrepresented him as an abettor of heresy. Besides, it was somewhat premature to settle the succession, when he might yet be blessed with offspring. To take up arms under such circumstances argued a distrust of Providence, of his own manly vigour, and of the fecundity of his royal consort. As for the charge of removing the great lords from his person, he certainly had not neglected the House of Lorraine, but on the contrary had lavished on them the highest honours. And even were it otherwise, it is the sovereign's prerogative to dispense his favours to whom he will. But private interest alone was the real motive of the confederates, and the people would do well to open their eyes, and view the matter without passion. In spite of all their fair promises the march of the League troops was marked by ravages that would have been disgraceful even in an enemy's country. In conclusion, he summoned the chiefs to disband their forces, to rely upon his fatherly love for all his subjects, especially for those of the true religion, and to live in amity with each other; and he positively prohibited the formation of any Leagues or Associations for any purpose whatsoever.

Very different was the Manifesto published at Bergerac by the King of Navarre, and addressed to all the Princes, Prelates, and Potentates of Christendom. He declared his belief in the doctrines of Christianity, his submission to the decisions of the early Councils, and his readiness to be guided by those of a new Council that should freely and fully represent the Church of Christ. His pretended conversion to the Roman Catholic religion was notoriously

the result of violence, and as soon as he once more became a free agent, he had openly avowed the faith of his childhood. Nevertheless, he bore no ill-will towards the Catholics individually, and was quite willing to be instructed in the peculiar articles of their creed, though not with a poniard at his breast. In his own dominions he had never persecuted those of a different religion. On the contrary, he had always treated the Clergy with respect, and allowed them unrestricted liberty of conscience. It was false to assert that he had ever concluded any treaties with foreign Princes, nor had he ever speculated on the probability of being successor to a Monarch, only two years older than himself. It was true that he had applied to His Majesty for permission to retain the places of security, after the expiration of the six years stipulated in the Edict of Poitiers, because many of the articles of that same Edict, in favor of the Protestants, had never been executed. But he would not refuse to surrender them, if Guise and the Leaguers would at the same time give up the places they possessed. He concluded by praying His Majesty to spare the further effusion of innocent blood, and to permit himself and the Duke of Guise to decide their quarrel in single combat, or attended each, by one, five, or ten gentlemen. If Guise objected to fight within the Kingdom, he was ready to meet him elsewhere, on whatever ground he might prefer.

This spirited and characteristic declaration, which proceeded from the practised pen of Duplessis-Mornay, terminated with a citation from the 120th Psalm, 2nd and 6th verses. "Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips and from a deceitful tongue. * * * I labour for peace, but when I speak unto them thereof, they make them ready to battle." Some of the Catholic Lords also put forth an address to their fellow-countrymen, asserting their zealous attachment to the religion of their forefathers, and their loyalty to their sovereign; but expressing their suspicions of the real nature of the Association proposed with so much parade for the defence of Church and State, when neither was menaced by foreign or domestic foe. They further protested against the insidious proclamations and unlawful conduct of that body, and warned the people of the disastrous consequences that must ensue, from driving a large proportion of their fellow-subjects to despair. Finally, they tendered their devoted services to His Majesty, and besought him not to identify himself too hastily with a party that acted on such pernicious principles.

Navarre's Manifesto gained him much good will and sympathy. The middle classes were pleased with his desire to stop the effusion of blood, while his challenge to the Duke of Guise accorded with the chivalrous notions of honour not yet quite exploded among the nobles. Guise, however, replied with much dignity and prudence, that he bore no personal enmity towards the King of Navarre, and were it otherwise, he could not consent to jeopardize his great and holy cause for the adjustment of a private quarrel.

Both parties now commenced the war of pamphlets and learned invective that continued throughout the struggle, but the only paper at this time worthy of notice was published by Duplessis-Mornay. After sarcastically alluding to the boasted ancestry of the Lorraine Princes, he inquires how it came to pass that while it was deemed consistent with Christianity and sound religion on the part of Charles Quint and Philip II. to permit the existence of Protestants in Germany and Holland, it should become so great a subject of offence on the part of Henry III. in France. To secure the succession of a Roman Catholic Prince on the death of a King aged only thirty-four, the Leaguers consistently nominated a Prelate nearly double that age. Guise himself, who professed such ardent patriotism, was but the instrument of the Court of Spain, whose gold it was that he so magnificently distributed throughout the kingdom. If fears were entertained of a sovereign imbued with heretical opinions, why did they not attempt to convert him? The King of Navarre was no bigot, but quite open to conviction, and ready to submit to the decisions of a general Council. But surely Henry III. had a more reasonable hope of raising up offspring than the Cardinal, an infirm and unmarried Churchman. In any case, no disquietude need be entertained with regard to the King of Navarre. His religion taught him universal tolerance, and respect for the sincere opinions of all men. In his own principality Catholics and Protestants were treated alike without any invidious distinction, and many of the former might be found even in his body guard. Besides, he was a true Frenchman and the mortal enemy of Spain. Let then the words *Papist* and *Huguenot* be buried in everlasting oblivion, and let there be henceforth only two classes of men in the kingdom—the lovers of their country, and the servants of the Spaniards. The League will then speedily fall to pieces, and on the graves of its partisans shall be inscribed this epitaph: 'Here lie the first Spanish Frenchmen.'*

But it was not by pamphlets, however ably written, that the fortune of the contending factions was to be decided. Henry III. therefore issued orders for the establishment of magazines of corn and wine at Poitiers, St. Maixent, Châtelleravlt, Niort, Touars, Angoulême, and some other places. Fleury, the brother-in-law of Villeroy, one of the Secretaries of State, had succeeded in raising a formidable body of Swiss, but the different roads into France were occupied by the Leaguers. The King lost no time therefore in seducing from their cause Mandelot, the Governor of Lyons, whose only daughter was in consequence married to Charles D'Alincourt, Villeroy's son, to whom was promised the reversion of the charge on the death or resignation of his father-in-law. Of all the cities that had espoused the cause of the League, Paris was by far the most violent, and

* This clever memoir begins with quoting Proverbs xx.—26, and xvi.—14: "A wise King scattereth the wicked, and bringeth the wheel over them" * * * "The wrath of a King is as messengers of death; but a wise man will pacify it;"—and I. Peter xi.—17: "Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the King."

the citizens even remitted 300,000 crowns to the Duke of Guise to assist him in his enterprise. Their secret machinations, however, were from time to time communicated to the King by one Nicholas Poulain, a contemptible fellow, but whose evidence might on many occasions have proved very serviceable, had the King possessed sufficient energy and decision to profit by it. With characteristic duplicity Henry had sent Marshal Matignon to negociate with the King of Navarre and prevent him from assuming a hostile attitude, while at the same time he commissioned the Queen-mother to effect a reconciliation with Guise and the Leaguers. He also by the advice of his favorite Epernon formed a body guard of forty-five Gascon gentlemen—the notorious Quarante-Cinq—who in consideration of a salary of one hundred crowns a month devoted themselves without scruple or inquiry to the execution of his most atrocious behests.

Catherine proceeded without delay to Epernay in Champagne,* but, as the Guises insisted as a preliminary step that all previous Edicts of Pacification should be revoked, that a war of extermination should be proclaimed, and the Huguenots forcibly expelled from their cautionary towns, some time was expended in negociation, and it was not until the 7th of July that the terms were finally agreed upon at Nemours.*

Guise, however, had become really desirous of peace with the King, for he perceived that the Swiss in the royalist pay were likely to prove too much for the Duke of Mayenne, who had been despatched to oppose their entrance into the Kingdom, while Philip the Second's habitual dilatoriness in furnishing the promised treasure, prevented him from levying any troops in Germany. The King now undertook to place 200,000 crowns at the disposal of the Duke to defray the expences of constructing a citadel at Verdun, besides a similar amount for the pay of his foreign allies, who were however to be immediately disbanded. The Leaguers were also indemnified for any proceedings that might be instituted against them for the illegal appropriation of 110,000 crowns seized by them from the collectors of taxes. Their conduct was approved, and several important places were given to them as hostages, such as Reims, Châlons, Soissons, Dinan, Dijon and Beaume. To each of the great Chiefs of the League was further assigned a guard of one hundred dragoons, and Henry III. engaged to revoke all edicts in favor of the Huguenots. As soon as this treaty was known Navarre wrote to the King, dwelling upon his own patience and forbearance, and reminding his Majesty of his repeated promises not to permit any infringement of the last act of Pacification. He likewise addressed separate memorials to the Nobility, the Third Estate, and the Parliaments, in justification of his own conduct, which had

* The Court Physician Miron was continually employed as the agent of communication between the King and his mother. In allusion to his repeated journies appeared the following distich—

Imploravit opem Medici pax ægra, Deique,
Deseruit, morbos mox habitura graves.

merited very different treatment, at least from his sovereign.*

But the King had now gone too far to recede, and on the 18th of July he went in great state to the Parliament to enregister the Edict of Revocation. The counsellors were attired in their scarlet robes to do honour to the ceremony, and the cry of *Vive le Roi!* once more rose from the lips of the populace, as he passed through the crowded streets. He is reported, however, to have thus addressed the Cardinal of Bourbon: "My uncle, contrary to my conscience, but right gladly, did I publish the Edicts of Pacification, because they were calculated to relieve the distress of my subjects: to-day I am going to promulgate their revocation agreeably to my conscience, but most reluctantly, because from it will ensue the ruin of my state and of my people." In his address to the Parliament the King dwelt at some length on the various means he had essayed in the hope of uniting all his subjects in the bond of peace and fellowship, but finding that gentleness and forbearance were of no avail, he was compelled to have recourse to more stringent measures, and henceforth irrevocably prohibited the exercise of any other than the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman religion within his dominions, on pain of imprisonment and confiscation of property. All Calvinist ministers were required to leave the Kingdom within one month, and the lay professors of heresy within six months, during which period they were allowed to alienate and realize their worldly goods. No heretics of any denomination were henceforth admissible to any office or dignity, and the Huguenots were summoned at once to give up the towns they held in trust. But under no pretext whatsoever except by the King's authority, were any troops to be levied or arms collected, though all past acts of this kind on the part of the League Princes and Lords were declared pardonable, and even praiseworthy, because they had been solely instigated by pure and religious motives.

The treaty of Nemours convinced the Protestant leaders that their only hope of safety was in their unanimity, promptitude, and perseverance. During the peace their numbers and influence had greatly diminished, for those who feared not the sword of an enemy were keenly sensible of neglect and ridicule. Fortunately, however, many Catholic nobles were averse to the arrogance of the Guise faction, and Damville—now Duke of Montmorency—with Marshals Biron and Matignon, openly or indirectly, espoused the cause of the persecuted Huguenots. In consequence Duplessis-Mornay drew up an address to the nation at large—dated from St. Paul de Cadegoùx, August the Tenth—in which he recapitulated the more detailed statements contained in Navarre's recent letters, and protested in the name of all the French Calvinists, the ut-

* It is said that Navarre was deeply affected on hearing that the treaty of Nemours had been actually concluded. His head sank forward on his hand, and for a long time he remained in silent abstraction. Recovering himself with a manly self-control, he exclaimed with a sigh: "Unhappy France, I can then do nothing for thee," and it was observed that the part of his moustaches which had been covered with his hand, had turned quite grey.

most respect for the King and his royal mother. A strong proof that they bore no hostile feeling towards the members of the Catholic religion was the fact that they had lately been joined by the Duke of Montmorency than whom the Church of Rome did not possess a more zealous champion. But though nothing would ever tempt them to become aggressors, they were nevertheless determined to defend themselves against the tyranny of those who troubled the tranquillity of the realm, and they earnestly invited all true Frenchmen to co-operate with them for this purpose, on which they devoutly implored the blessing of the Almighty.

But while the Protestants justly complained of the severity with which they were treated, the Clergy and the bigotted populace murmured at the King's lenity in granting them so long a delay as six months, and clamorously demanded the immediate commencement of hostilities. Henry III., therefore, summoned to his presence, at the Louvre, the first and second Presidents of the Parliament, the Dean of the Cathedral, and the Provost of Trades. He also requested the attendance of the Cardinal of Guise. He then informed them that it was with great reluctance he had repealed the Edicts of Pacification, because he foresaw the calamities that would too soon alight on his subjects, but since by the advice of his counsellors, and in compliance with the wishes of his people, he had at last declared war, he was resolved to prosecute it with vigour, and in no way to spare himself. But to be able to do so effectually he must have ample funds at his disposal. Turning to the President, he commended his zeal, which he had particularly noticed in the long speech he delivered on the occasion of enregistering the Edict of Revocation, and he expressed his conviction that both the President and his colleagues would cheerfully forego their salaries while the war continued. He then addressed the Provost, and said he was glad to find that the war was so popular among the inhabitants of his capital, as he should be compelled not only to stop the payment of the annuities on the Hotêl de Ville, but to require a grant of 200,000 crowns to defray the initiatory charges of the approaching campaign. To the Cardinal he expressed a hope that he should be able to provide for the expences of the first month without burdening the Clergy, but after that he should not hesitate to alienate as much of the Church property as the exigencies of the case might demand, nor should he trouble himself to solicit the sanction of the Pope. Finding them stand amazed and speechless at this unexpected and most unpalatable annunciation he angrily continued: "You would have done well to have trusted in me, and continued to enjoy the sweets of peace, without pretending to decide upon war in your choir or your shop. I much fear that in seeking to put down preaching we shall endanger the Mass. But it is now too late for words, we must have actions."

August 25.—Willing to make a last effort to avert the impending hostilities, the King despatched Lenoncourt, afterwards Cardinal, President Brulart, and some Doctors of Theology, to endeavor to persuade Navarre to abjure Protestantism, and thus

remove the only reasonable objection to his succession to the throne. These envoys earnestly besought that Prince at least to suspend the public exercise of Calvinism for six months, in the course of which interval a general Council would probably be convoked. They also called upon him to give up the cautionary towns, and stated that the Queen mother would go as far as Champigny to confer with him personally, if he would stop the advance of his foreign auxiliaries. In reply, Navarre repeated his readiness to bow to the decisions of a general Council, but declared his inability to suspend the public exercise of the Protestant religion for any period whatsoever. As for surrendering the towns he held, he rather stood in need of more, nor could he think of counter-ordering the march of his foreign allies, though he would proceed to Bergerac to arrange an interview with Her Majesty if the League forçes were withdrawn across the Loire. The Deputies therefore returned to Court, foiled in every attempt to shake Navarre's constancy, or to induce him to forsake his friends in the hour of danger.

In the early part of the year 1585, the venerable, moderate, and charitable Pontiff Gregory XIII. had been gathered to his fathers, after an earthly pilgrimage of 86 years. He was succeeded by Felix Peretti, Cardinal Montalto, who took the title of Sixtus the Fifth, or Sixte-Quint, as he is known in French history.*

Sprung from the very dregs of the people the new Pope, who had also recently filled the office of Grand Inquisitor, united to great abilities the imperious, overbearing, and inflexible demeanor which usually characterizes men of low origin suddenly elevated to high rank and eminence. The urgent solicitations of Father Matthieu and Cardinal Pellévé, supported by his own natural predilections, easily induced him to become the patron of the League. Accordingly on the 9th of September he fulminated a Bull of ex-communication against Henry of Bourbon, heretofore King of Navarre, and Henry of Condé, heretofore Prince of Condé, by which he declared them incapable, as relapsed heretics, of holding any office or dignity, or of succeeding to any rights or property much less to the throne of the most Christian kingdom of France: and further forbade all subjects and vassals to render them any sort of obedience, or respect, on pain of being included in the same sentence.

This arrogant interference with the internal affairs of their country, inspired all true patriots with the most lively indignation, and the Parliament presented a very strong remonstrance to his Majesty on the subject—denying the Pope's right or power to interfere in any manner with the succession of the French Crown. One of the Councillors even urged the King to throw the Bull into the flames in presence of all the leading Prelates of the Galli-

* As the late Pope gradually became more and more infirm, Cardinal Montalto affected likewise to decline in health and strength. On the death of Gregory XIII. the rival factions were so equally divided, that they alike despaired of success, and to gain a little breathing time, agreed to elect the dying Cardinal. But no sooner was he chosen to fill the Pontifical chair, than he threw away his crutches, and proceeding to the Church with a firm and upright gait, performed the usual service with a sonorous and unfailing voice.

can Church, and to instruct the Attorney-General to proceed against those persons who had introduced it into the Kingdom. But Henry III. feared to offend the League, and contented himself with refusing to issue a Royal Edict to confirm and sanction the Bull. It was attacked, however, in no measured terms by a very spirited pamphlet, ascribed to the pen of the well-known lawyer Francis Hotman, and the "Brutum Fulmen" of Pope Sixtus V. has almost passed into a proverb. The Huguenot Princes also protested against a precedent so dangerous and so insulting to all Kings, Princes, and people. On the 6th of November a declaration was posted up in several parts of Rome, and attached even to the doors of the Vatican, appealing in the names of Navarre and Condé to the Court of Peers against the Bull of "Monsieur Sixte, soi-disant Pope," who was charged with foul and malicious falsehood, and challenged to appear before a free and general Council, when he should be clearly proved to be a heretic and Anti-Christ.

To allay the murmurs of the bigotted part of the population the King now consented to curtail the period of indulgence, and on the 16th of October enregistered a royal declaration to the effect that, as the Protestants had abused his forbearance, he felt himself compelled to modify the Edict of July, and to allow them only a fortnight to lay down their arms and abjure heresy, or else to quit the kingdom. But females, whether married or single, were still permitted to remain until the expiration of the original period of six months.

Although Sixtus V. had shown himself so favorable to the pretensions of the Leaguers, he did not consider it equally essential to conciliate their sovereign, and nominal chief. Henry had requested him not to appoint as his Legate in France, Frangipan, Archbishop of Nazareth, as he believed him to be a warm partisan of the Duke of Guise, but Sixtus did not deign to notice his objection. On his arrival at Lyons, the new Legate was joyfully welcomed and magnificently entertained by the members of the League, but his satisfaction at this honorable reception was not a little diminished by a letter that here reached him from the King, desiring him to remain in whatever city the same might find him until he received further instructions from the Pontiff. On hearing of this insult to his representative, Sixtus commanded the French ambassador to leave the papal dominions within three days, to which the other scornfully replied that they were not so extensive but that he could leave them in one. Mutual concessions were then made. The ambassador remained at his post, and Henry III. received the Legate, who exhibited the utmost impartiality and moderation until his death in 1587 opened the way to a more turbulent and intriguing Churchman.

Towards the close of the year the Clergy renewed their systematic persecution of the King, and on the 19th of November the Bishop of Brieux, in presence of the Cardinal of Bourbon and other high dignitaries, delivered a long and labored harangue, exhorting his Majesty to exercise more severity towards the heretics, to accept

the decrees of the Council of Trent, to prevent the alienation of Church property for any cause whatsoever, and to restore the Church to all the privileges and immunities it had enjoyed under the reign of Louis IX., the blessed Saint and Martyr. But long ere this, the eighth civil war of religion, commonly called "The War of the Three Henries," had broken out with all the horrors and sufferings that usually characterize the animosity of fellow-countrymen.

The campaign commenced rather in favor of the Protestants, though its termination proved equally disastrous, owing to the impetuosity of the Prince of Condé, whose qualities were rather those of a valiant partisan than of a judicious commander. The King had sent an army to the frontiers, under Guise in person, to oppose the passage of the German auxiliaries so anxiously expected by Navarre. The operations of this General, however, were confined to the capture of a few small places belonging to the duchy of Bouillon, nor would his force have been adequate to cope with the Germans, had they appeared in the field.

The Duke of Mayenne commanded a second army in Guyenne, but badly equipped and ill-supplied with either provisions or money, besides that he was perpetually thwarted by the wilful negligence of his Lieutenants, Biron and Matignon, who had no wish to crush the Huguenots to hasten the aggrandizement of the House of Guise. The Duke of Joyeuse in Gascony was equally inert, but in Brittany and Poitou affairs of a more stirring nature took place. The Duke of Mercœur, at the head of about two thousand men, horse and foot, had invaded Poitou and laid all waste as he advanced. Condé was during this time at St. Jean d'Angely, and collecting a gallant band of gentlemen and veteran soldiers, advanced to oppose the further progress of the enemy. Among his companions in arms were Rohan, D'Aubigné, St. Gelais, Clermont d'Amboise, and La Rochefoucault. With these he marched direct against Mercœur, who rapidly retreated under the walls of Fontenay. He had trusted indeed to have been admitted into the town, but the inhabitants, though Catholics, were ill-disposed towards the League. He was enabled, however, to take up a strong position, which he held good against the most furious assaults of the Huguenots. Under favor of the night he thence made a forced march towards Nantes, but being closely pursued, was compelled to abandon both his plunder and his baggage, and with difficulty effected his passage across the Loire. Following up his success, Condé obtained possession of several small forts and islands, and on the 11th of September, to gratify the citizens of La Rochelle, sat down before Brouage, while a squadron blockaded the port from the sea. The town was defended by St. Luc, but his garrison was so small, and the supply of provisions so scanty, that it was expected he would soon be forced to surrender. Unfortunately, a singular incident occurred that led to the dispersion of the Protestants, and proved the safety of Brouage and its gallant commander.

A Captain named Du Halot had formerly been governor of the

Castle of Angers as the Lieutenant of Bussy d'Amboise, on whose death he had been dispossessed by Count Brissac, who placed one of his own officers in that responsible post. Du Halot was a royalist, but he had formed an intimacy with one Fresne, a leaguer, who had been dismissed from Brissac's service, and with Rochesnortes, a gentleman attached to the King of Navarre. These three agreed for a time to forget their political differences, and to seize upon the castle. One day Fresne called upon the Governor, a Greek Captain with whom he was acquainted, and was invited to stop and partake of his dinner. The other declined, as some friends were waiting for him outside. The hospitable Greek desired him to bring them in also. He readily complied, and they immediately fell upon the guard, while Fresne with his own hand slew his too confiding friend. The castle was taken, but the victors were too few to man the battlements. Du Halot therefore ventured into the town, and assured the inhabitants that they had taken the place by the King's authority. He was nevertheless arrested, and put upon his trial for treachery and rebellion, and being disavowed by the King, was broken on the wheel under the eyes of his companions. Fresne then went forth to parley with the town's people, who instead of listening to him, proposed to storm the castle. Perceiving their intention, the soldiers hastily raised the drawbridge before their leader could spring upon it. He caught, however, one of the chains, and was about to pull himself up, when he received a wound in the hand that made him loose his hold, and he fell into the dry and rocky moat that surrounded the walls—where a wild stag, that was kept in it, furiously attacked and soon killed him. The garrison now consisted of sixteen men, of whom nine were Papists, but they daily expected to be reinforced by the Huguenots, to whom alone they could look for recompense, or even for life. Troops, however, arrived from all quarters and closely invested the castle, while the people of the town constructed barricades up to the very moat. To add to their discomfiture, their only surviving leader, Rochesnortes, was killed by two musket balls as he was reclining in one of the embrasures after dinner. Count Brissac, the Duke of Joyeuse and his brother Count Bouchage, had now come up, and, as further resistance was useless, the garrison capitulated on the 18th of October, on condition that their lives should be spared, and that their persons should not be searched. The Huguenots were moreover, to be conducted in safety to the Prince of Condé, while the Papists received each a horse and a thousand crowns. One of the soldiers, it is said, contrived to secrete a magnificent crucifix richly set with diamonds, which he afterwards sold for 1,500 crowns.

So far little mischief had been incurred by either party. But the Prince of Condé, on receiving intelligence that the castle of Angers had been surprised, resolved to send reinforcements, and D'Aubigné was detached with 1100 men for that purpose. Unhappily, however, Condé was persuaded that his dignity and interests required him to proceed

thither in person, and in an evil hour he recalled D'Aubigné. After thus losing eleven days he set out on this ill-fated expedition on the 8th of October, leaving Ste-Mesme to continue the blockade of Brouage, which could not possibly have held out much longer. His force consisted of 2000 cavalry, but his movements were impeded by the quantity of baggage his followers deemed essential to their comforts. The first difficulty he encountered was at the passage of the Loire, but this he at last accomplished by means of some wine-boats that he found at Roziers, between Saumur and Angers. With equal trouble he crossed the deep and swollen Laution, and arrived before Angers on the 21st of the month. At first he refused to believe that the castle had surrendered—though he was previously aware of the death of Rochesnortes—but a galling fire directed against his advanced guard, under St. Gelais, convinced him that he had arrived too late. After some slight skirmishes he made himself master of the suburbs, but the barricades at the entrance of the town forbade his farther progress. Next day Rohan persuaded the Prince to retire, as the enemy was advancing on all sides in great force. He therefore fell back upon Beaufort, where he lost much valuable time. On arriving with the main body on the banks of the Laution, he found only two small boats in readiness for the passage of his men, and one of these being over filled, went to the bottom. The advanced guard under St. Laval had pushed forward, and crossed the Loire, with a view to protect the passage of the troops. But some gun-boats immediately afterwards dropped down the river from St. Maur, and intercepted all communication between the two corps. On this St. Laval advanced rapidly into Poitou, with the hope of creating a diversion, and Condé found himself constrained to recall the troops that had already crossed the Laution. These returned ten at at a time in the most frightful confusion, each striving to be the first. Marching back to Beaufort, the Prince crossed the Laution at Lude by means of some small bridges, a previous knowledge of which might have saved him both anxiety and loss, and another small stream by a difficult ford. As his troops formed on the opposite bank, a little incident occurred that serves to illustrate the very lax discipline that prevailed in those days. An unlucky hare started up from beneath the horse's feet. Some two hundred dragoons immediately gave chase with the dogs that followed them in their campaignings. The others hearing the loud shouts, and perceiving the confusion of their comrades, very naturally imagined that the enemy was at hand, and prepared to give battle. The hare, however, by repeated doublings, escaped, a circumstance that diffused some encouragement among the men as a token of God's providence, and a happy augury of their own deliverance.*

The League forces had now

* During the civil dissensions in Flanders, about the year 1326, Walter Ratzer, the leader of the men of Bruges and Nieuport, on the point of engaging the citizens of Ghent under Hector Valain, was panic-stricken by a similar incident. A hare sprang up at his horse's feet and his followers remarked the sudden pallor of his countenance and the convulsive trembling of his limbs, and as nothing is more contagious than fear, they soon took to flight.

hemmed them in on all sides, and the village tocsin plainly told the direction of Condé's embarrassed march. Rohan, after vainly endeavouring to persuade him to disband his troops, left him at St. Ernoul, and dispersing his followers into groups of ten or a dozen, safely made his way to La Rochelle, where he shortly afterwards died from the effect of his fatigues. The next day the Prince was compelled to adopt his advice, and making his way to the sea-coast in disguise, crossed in a fishing boat to Guernsey, and thence to the main land of England, where he was hospitably received by the Queen. Few men of note perished in this disastrous and ill-conducted expedition, for the gentlemen of the country in general connived at their escape, though they did not disdain to accept an equivalent in money, plunder or horses. Some of the private soldiers, who had nothing to give, and whose promises were not deemed very good security, were not so fortunate, but fell by the hands of the exasperated peasantry they had so recently oppressed in their hour of might and pride.

Ste-Mesme had in the meantime used every means to reduce the garrison of Brouage, but his men were disheartened by rumours of Condé's discomfiture, and no sooner heard that Marshal Matignon was approaching with a strong force, than they hastily abandoned the siege. Pushing forward in disorder to the Charente, they were overtaken by St. Luc, and the greater part of their rear-guard cut to pieces.

This fortunate issue of the campaign filled the Leaguers with unbounded satisfaction. The Clergy, and especially the Jesuits, inflamed the populace with the utmost fury against the heretics, and even the King insulted their misfortunes. But their worst enemies were the apostates from their own profession, who hoped by pre-eminent severity to efface the remembrance of their own errors. Many of the most ardent Huguenots escaped from the storm to Sedan, Germany, Geneva, England, St. Jean d'Angély and La Rochelle. The plains around these two latter places were covered with huts aud tents containing the families and fortunes of the unhappy fugitives. During the three preceding years, the plague had desolated these districts, and it was reasonably feared that its ravages would be dreadful among these hordes of starving, ill-clothed and careworn emigrants: but as if by a special interposition of Providence, the pest was at once stayed. Many Huguenots, however, abjured their faith in order to save their property, and strove to quiet their consciences by adding, "since such is his Majesty's pleasure." A more binding and detailed form of confession was therefore drawn up by the Bishop of Angers, which all proselytes were compelled to sign and observe. After repeating all the articles of the Nicene Creed, the convert was required to affirm his belief in the seven Sacraments of the Church of Rome, in the doctrine of Transubstantiation, and in the decisions of the Council of Trent touching original Sin and the Justification of mankind. He was further called upon to believe in Purgatory, the mediation of Saints, the worship of images, the

plenary power of the Church, the divine succession of the Popes, and the supremacy of the Roman Catholic religion. The document concluded with an unreserved renunciation and abjuration of every form of heresy, and an expression of gratitude to the King for his unmerited clemency and forbearance.*

During these operations in Poitou, the King of Navarre had been actively engaged in raising troops and in strengthening the defensible positions in his government of Guyenne. It is reported, and perhaps it is not inconsistent with human nature to believe, that he felt but little sorrow for the total failure of his rival. Although decidedly inferior to him in abilities, Condé possessed a larger share of the confidence and esteem of the Huguenots, partly owing to the high celebrity of his father, but more so to the dissolute and immoral habits of Navarre. But with the exception of the veteran La Noue, the latter was the only General possessed of any real knowledge of the military art that now remained to their cause.

* The form is explicit on these two heads : " J'affirme assurément qu'on doit honorer les Saints et Saintes bien heureux et regnans avec Jesus-Christ lesquels prient et offrent à Dieu leurs oraisons pour nous, et desquels on doit honorer les saintes reliques. J'affirme assurément que l'on doit avoir et retenir les Images de Notre Seigneur et Redempteur Jesus-Christ, de sa bien heureuse Mère *perpetuellement vierge* et des autres Saints et Saintes, en leur faisant l' honneur et veneration qui leur appartient.

LETTERS ON INDIA.—NO. I.

[I can tell the *Times* that it was precisely by conduct like this—by which scandalous and lying charges were brought against honorable men—that the Press of France had lost all character with the people of France: that during the existence of the Republic the middle classes and all the people in Paris looked on with disregard, almost with pleasure, while the papers, one after another, were brought under the penalties of the law; and that, finally, they looked on without any opposition, and apparently without any discontent, when their newspaper writers were obliged to put their names to every article, and afterwards when three-fourths of them were suppressed.—*Mr. Bright's Speech on Kossuth.*]

From QUENTIN DEVERIL, ESQ., C. S., *Agra, to* MAXWELL PHIPPS, ESQ., *Portland Place, London.*

MY DEAR PHIPPS,—Mrs. Deveril having gone to the Hills "just to take up the poor children, dear things, they were looking so white," (I have seen them look precious black in the face after breakfast, bless them, and Mrs. D. might have been back two months ago, but that's neither here nor there,) Mrs. D. I say being in the Hills, and work something slack by reason of the sowing for the Khurreef, I have time for one of those long rigmaroles de omnibus rebus, which you are pleased to like so much. When one has heard the reports in the morning, and done a little collectory after breakfast, overhauled the English correspondence of the day, and drafted answers, taken the petitions in cutcherry, decided the summary suits, and had a Ferry Fund meeting, there remains literally nothing to do; and I must say that if Mrs. D. would only come back, these long dull afternoons are just the time when a little music would be the most refreshing thing in the world. It is not, my dear Phipps, as if her health required it; she does not write often to be sure, but her letters breathe of nothing but Picnics and Balls. Picnics to a man in his shirt-sleeves gasping before a Thermantidote! Balls to a person who can hardly keep awake, while he undresses at half-past eight! I have an idea, but shall I confess it to you, my old Gamaliel, at whose feet I learned all I know, not only of Regulation law, but of the ways of the world? I have been thinking of stopping the supplies, but I daren't! Don't you think, now that Parliament and the public are good enough to recollect our existence, a Bill might be passed requiring the Government of India to publish the Ladies' leave in orders like ours, and not to give it except on Medical certificate? I don't know though that this would do: they would wheedle the Doctors as well as I dare say Mrs. Phipps (to whom though still a stranger, I desire as ever my kind respects) manages when she wants you to go to the Isle of Wight.

Bear witness with me that I always expressed a belief that India would become a cry at Home this year; if there were no religious discussion or opera dancer at the moment, of superior in-

terest. And most thankful should all true friends of India be that the same is fulfilled. The people of England are a little hasty; and often misled by quacks for a time; but their fundamental characteristic is justice; and the real interests of this country will not suffer in the end. To be sure the evidence is somewhat exparte just at present; and so strong a prejudice is being created against the existing system that its favourers do not seem likely to get a hearing for some time. The "Examiner" I see calls the Company or the Civil Service, (it was not very clear which,) "the gentleman in the dock." Accepting this rather unsavoury metaphor, we may perhaps be permitted to ask—"Is not the prisoner allowed to make his statement?" Especially, my excellent Phipps, when the counsel for the prosecution, what with the misinformation in their briefs, and what with their own passions, are indulging in such ludicrous exaggerations and mis-statements, even from the Lord Chief Justice of England down to the Grub-street Humpty that sitteth upon the wall? The very contradictions in their (so-called) facts and their requisitions, should be a caution against hasty legislation. Lord Ellenborough, whose whole career in India was devoted to bombastic merry-Andrewing and furnishing food for "Punch," the Civilian Governor who made so many military aggressions, and paid so little attention to his civil duties, this disgraced blunderer makes a masterly speech, remarkable for temper and sense; while the Editor of the "Times," who ought to know at least as much about the subject, and to be free from the prejudices of the discarded servants, piles up a private indictment of his own in the purest spirit of those old-fashioned pleadings, (so dear to the English lawyers) in which, for fear of not getting redress for a cow having strayed into his paddock, a complainant had to state that the trespass was accompanied by "force and arms, and great violence, on the part of several, that is to say twenty men, who with sundry bulls and cows, that is to say eighty-nine bulls and four hundred cows, and being provided with sticks and stones, etc. etc."

One thing dwelt upon in the petitions is (ah Phipps! fancy the Baboos of Calcutta representing native opinion; as much as the wolf does that of the sheep, eh?) dwelt on in the petitions, and re-echoed in the House and out, is that we—the Magistracy—don't know law. A distinguished Crown lawyer out here was once heard to say that in going from Calcutta to Mussoorie he only saw a good law library in the house of one Civil Servant out of the many with whom he stayed on the road. I dare say he did not; and how many libraries did he see on Conchology or Thorough Bass? We have no more to do with English law (thank God!) than we have with French. Of course the more we study the Codes of other countries the more acquaintance we get with the true (and also the false) principles of the science; but after all, what have we to do with general principles? We are put here to perform certain practical duties, and to supervise certain work of our subordinates, and if we stick to the Regulations, I don't suppose

we shall suffer much from our ignorance of foreign systems. It is the opinion of those who know this country best that the law and procedure are even now a great deal too artificial, and too much approached to English rules to suit so very anomalous a people as the Hindoostanees. Why then should we strive to make matters worse? In the non-Regulation Provinces—especially the Punjab—you would be surprised how much better they get on than they did in Bengal in your time, or in fact than they do now; fewer criminals escape, more cases (immeasurably more) are decided by Punchayt, and the people are delighted with our rule. Though generally more favourable to the peasantry, the population at large, than to the aristocracy, it has in this instance conciliated the Sikhs themselves, a dominant class, dispossessed by us. It is the fashion just now to abuse the Company's government, because it has displaced the native gentry, and reduced the country to a dead level of mediocrity. Surely it is not from any honourable friends on the extreme left that I hear this extremely *gauche* remark. What, the friends of the people object to an Anglo-Saxon Government because it *fosters* the people! Look at Bengal where this notion was acted upon, and a middle-class attempted to be created, rather than preserved. Where are the old zemindars now, those landed proprietors with whom Lord Cornwallis was instructed to make such arrangements as might make of them a class of landed nobles and squires, such as is the glory of our own free and historic country?

The last time I had a holiday, we went to Agra, and I formed one of a party who went to visit the Taj by moonlight. As I gazed on this matchless gem of architecture, the angular uniformity of its outline sunk into chiaroscuro by the faëry light; and allowed my mind to dwell with pleasure on the reflection, that even under the roof of the Zenana the domestic affections would sometimes assert their pure influence. A voice near me (somewhat tobacco-laden) remarked "Where shall the Company leave behind them a monument like that? Buggy wheels and black bottle, sir..." "Pardon me," said I, "I know what you are going to say." He was the son of an eminent button-maker from the Midland countries, who was touring a few weeks through this country previous to going into Parliament "on the Indian question."

"Let us ask," I pursued, "from this respectable old gentleman, a few questions. You perceive, he is a Moslem, and even his respect for the Sahib-log won't prevent his praising the old King if he can. Ho Shekh jee!" The Shekh approaching, I opened the conversation with a common-place remark upon the building, and then said that the Padshahs were great men!

"True word, my lord!" replied the old man, "they took what they wanted, and built very large houses, very fine tombs, wah! The marble and jewels cost a crore of rupees, which was never paid, and four lacs of coolies and brick-layers were employed."

"Of course they were paid," said Mr. Buttonshank, when he understood the foregoing.

" Paid? O fosterer of the humble! the King gave his order and his slaves obeyed. Praise be to God," and turning his rosary, off tottered the old gentleman well-pleased with a trifling "gratuity." His account of the matter is generally believed to be substantially correct, and that the monument of conjugal love was built for nothing is not paid for in fact to this day; but if it is not, still what, let me ask, could have been the antecedents, what the political education of a people who could think such a way of going to work natural, nay somewhat praise-worthy? Besides what are these boasted works? A few canals there were, and serais, not comparable to ours; the rest mausoleums and mosques. Where were the Trunk-road with its bungalows, Gunges, supply houses and encamping-grounds? Where the Colleges, Lunatic Asylums, Hospitals, Dispensaries? It is the present practice of the Government that in any town where the inhabitants build a Dispensary, they are immediately provided with stores and instruments, and when the institution has been carried on for a year, the State takes charge of it in perpetuity, sending a Sub-Assistant Surgeon, a graduate of the Calcutta Medical College, to undertake the Medical duties. Even in your time, my dear Maxwell, there was no comparison between the care *of the people* taken by the old Mussulman rulers and by us; *now* you would hardly believe you were in the same country. It is not our fault that we are surrounded by barbarous tribes and miscreant invaders, who force us into constant wars for self-defence; for if we once put up with a serious affront, I believe we may as well take to our ships.

The *Times* and Lord Campbell are quite agreed upon one thing, that a young Civilian becomes *a Judge* immediately on leaving Haileybury—glorious news for the youngsters. I only know that I had been seventeen years in the country before I was made a *Magistrate* even; and then thought myself lucky. The papers out here cry out against the Government for the seniority system, and urge them to realize the provisions of the Act, whereby the highest offices were declared open to a servant of twelve years standing. Here 'a slight discordance in ideas.' So, again, with another parliamentary permission, viz. that the natives *might* be employed in the highest offices, some rampant individuals argue as if this involved that they *must;* and accuse the local Government of double-dealing, because they have neglected to avail themselves of a permission to do what they never wished. At the very same time another band of reformers cry—" Throw open your service to the English public; more Europeans are wanted."

I dare say that there is some grain of truth in each of these positions: and that the old via media will be the surest means of drawing it out. The "parallelogram of forces" and its resultant are often as important in moral as in physical dynamics. The objection to neglecting seniority as a *general principle* is obvious, the local government unchecked by public opinion or by any influential Press, would have positive-

ly no restraint from the grossest jobbery and favouritism in the bestowal of appointments. At the same time it cannot be denied that to promote a man absolutely without reference to merit, is to introduce a most fatal source of negligence and inefficiency. Under these circumstances, why not have some rule under which a man thought unworthy of promotion should be retained in his present inferior grade for a certain probationary period, after which, if he did not amend his ways, he might be forced to retire on a pension proportioned to his standing in the service and his subscriptions to the Fund, subject, of course, to the confirmation of the home authorities. And thus too in the matter of the Covenant, which is merely a Commission, I should wish the Governor General to have the same power of recommending for promotion a deserving and experienced Uncovenanted servant, as the Commander-in-Chief has of laying before the Horse Guards the name of a meritorious Serjeant Major.

This should be done cautiously, especially with natives. You know what a native's view of power usually is—a marketable commodity. Yet I dare say you will agree with me when I say I would rather have a case before Ahmed Beg, your old Suddur Ala, than before Twemlow Twaddles, who is still, I grieve to say, Judge of this zillah.

Since I wrote thus far, we have received news which looks as if matters were clearing up a little. If the ministry make a cabinet question of their new charter, their firmness in so doing will undoubtedly be of the greatest service to their own future efficiency. Whether they will found the fortunes of India any the worse for doing so in this somewhat summary way, may fairly be questioned. Nor is it true, as a writer in the *Times*, with the usual determined recklessness of that journal on Indian politics, has been venturing to assert, that the charter was in 1833 so arranged as to determine and lapse *ex vi naturali* in 1853; if by that statement the writer meant that it was the expressed intention of the framers of the charter, that Indian administration should then devolve to the crown. It is true the charter of '33 like its predecessors was passed for twenty years, but the provision for lapsing was expressly made to take effect in '73, if the reserved fund of three millions should have reached, at compound interest, a sufficient sum for the liquidation of the proprietors' shares at £200 per share of £100.

Again, the reports of the Committees of the Lords and of the Commons agree in stating that they are satisfied with the results of their enquiries, and recommend the renewal of the present system. And after all, the legislature have had evidence on the points which chiefly concern the Home branch of the question. For it is no small portion of the present difficulty that a confusion has been created in the consideration of those points on which Parliament is now, or is capable of becoming, informed, with those points which belong to the special province of the local Government. The mischief being that the first class of sub-

jects are those alone which legitimately demand the attention of the Home Government, and that the latter are points on which the people out here possess the only means of acquiring information. Look you, Phipps ; supposing a watch-maker had two workmen, the one a worker in steel, a capital hand at forging springs ; the other a smart fellow, and bit of a practical mathematician and mechanist, who had to arrange the delicate details—would not the master deserve to lose his custom if he allowed the smith to be constantly interfering with fly-wheels, escapements, balances, and the rest ? The Home organization is the spring on which all our prosperity must chiefly depend ; and surely its manufacture and adjustment are sufficiently important to entitle them to claim the benefits of a " division of labour."

I am not " an optimist of Leadenhall Street," as you are well aware. I endeavour to do my work as well as circumstances will permit ; and am not personally afraid of any measures that may be taken for eliminating hard bargains from the Civil Service. In the same spirit I may say that I am earnestly devoted to education of two kinds : vernacular for the peasantry, and Indo-European for the less-occupied and more influential classes. I would gladly see steps taken for the introduction of English gradually as the language of the higher Courts, if not eventually of all. But these are points which might fairly be left to the discretion of the Local Government, were that body but properly organized, and its relations with Home unfettered by red-tape, and unembarrassed by double authority. The attacks on Leadenhall Street are mostly gratuitous, and will probably be thrown away, if only the eyes of the public in England should be opened in time. To this end however it is desirable that true accounts should be laid before them of the state of the country. Neither should implicit reliance be placed upon the statements of the Calcutta Baboos and other absentee landlords ; nor of European trades-people who have never wandered twenty miles from their marshy metropolis ; nor of Barristers of the Madras Supreme Court, who, having killed (and cooked) their own golden goose in the Presidency, are angry at not being permitted to extend their devastations into the Mofussil. But ask people who are really informed ; examine each person in his own department. Ask the Baboo whether the rent has been enhanced, or any of the conditions of the Permanent Settlement altered ; ask the boot-maker whether there be a heavy duty on leather, and whether the members of the Supreme Government pay for their shoes like Britons ; ask the barrister if litigation is not somewhat dearer in his Crown Court than in those of the Company ; and hear the military officer, the civilian and the engineer upon the statistics of their departments. You will then find that the local Governments and the Court of Directors have shewn the most consistent good faith, intelligence and zeal in the affairs of the army, the revenue, education and public works ; and that the constant obstacles to greater efforts have proceeded from the dege-

nerate state of the population, from the backwardness of Cannon Row, and from incessant wars initiated by stern necessity sometimes, generally by the ambition of English politicians. And when you hear of the destitute state of the people, you, my dear Phipps, should recollect a subject we have often discussed, which has a good deal more to do with it than any apathy, not otherwise proved, of the Company's Government. I allude to the absence of any custom of primogeniture, which must certainly be an evil in a crowded population, but yet which can hardly be interfered with by a Government pledged to support the laws of succession as they found them on taking possession of the country. The hereditary occupier of ten acres of land with full power of alienation, and all the rights of ownership subject to a certain payment to the state more savouring of a land-tax than a rent, such a proprietor dying with five sons, it is odd but the property dwindles down to two acres per man. Of course matter may be theoretically divisible *ad infinitum*, but it may be doubted whether in practice the same can be predicated of land; and ownership would probably entirely evaporate were it not for the principle so familiar to the natives, of holding their land in partnership. Still the divisions are often as minute as possible, and then in a bad year the "cottier" is either sold up at once by the Collector, or has recourse to the intermediate step of mortgaging his property to a money-lender, who forecloses, and the estate is sent into the market through the Civil Court. When our mission in this country shall be nearly accomplished, and the people have learned self-government, it may be hoped that they will themselves introduce some legislative remedy for this state of things; in the meanwhile it will partly cure itself, no doubt, by the land falling into the hands of wealthy mercantile firms, who can afford to keep it together in large holdings; and as intelligence and enterprize increase, will probably see the propriety of laying out more capital on stock, seed, machinery and supervision.

A Criminal Code, Phipps, was drawn up when you were in India in '37. Why has nothing more been done about it? Certain "Black Acts," or rather Black Drafts, appeared in the *Calcutta Gazette* in '51. Why were they not passed? The Court of Directors is understood to have initiated those measures. Why should that body have put any obstacles in the way of their fulfilment?

It is not at this time of day that we are to make the first discovery how badly crown influence operates in colonial administration. Mr. Robertson's taunt in his pamphlet on the first Burmah war is quite unanswerable. Canada, Jamaica, the Mauritius, Ceylon, three quarters of the world have already shewn that when the incapacity of ministerial nominees has nearly ruined a colony, there is no hope so certain, no nostrum so universal, as the calling in (as a last resource) of an Indian ex-official. The Company's services form the *corps de reserve* of the

Colonial office. They are drawn from the *middle classes*: remember that. Crown influence introduces jobbing and a flood of aristocratic *fainéants*, whom may the gods long keep from Indian shores. The reckless writer in the *Times*, whom we have previously noticed, is forced to admit that "the result [of the Company's government] is a better administration of an Eastern empire than prevails in most Crown Colonies." A curiously rash statement presently follows that "wars are undertaken without visible compulsion, and in defiance, it is understood, of the authorities constituting the Indian Councillors of the Crown." The fact being that the Court of Directors have a morbid dread of war, and that the ruinous campaigns of late years have always been caused either by the sternest "compulsion," or by the irresistible orders of the "Councillors of the Crown." Take the Afghan disaster, from the shade of which our glory has scarcely emerged, and which robbed the Government of £40,000,000, they would gladly have had for economic purposes. From the documentary history, and from Lord Broughton's own explicit declarations, it appears that the responsibility is to be entirely divided between that nobleman and Lord Auckland. Of the present Burmese war, the writer, so often referred to, says himself there is no reason for supposing that "the Directors are parties, either by consent or cognizance;" "indeed there is reason to believe that they *disapprove of it entirely*." Of the four remaining wars of modern times, the two Punjab campaigns arose from momentary causes not admitting of reference home, leaving the two campaigns of the great Bombastes in Gwalior and Sind!

The silence of Leadenhall Street becomes truly culpable when it allows the public at home to be misled by these terrible calumnies. Speaking on the subject of agricultural canals, Captain Baird Smith remarks, in his work on Italian irrigation, that none of the best informed public men, engineers or statesmen, were acquainted with the gigantic water-works of the Ganges and Jumna canals, transcending as they do anything of the kind in any part of the world, and ten times as large as the works that were pointed out to the writer in Lombardy as the wonders of the age. Knowing this, and bearing in mind the proverbial justice of the British people, may we not say that if the Company's Government fall, it will fall from its own invincible shyness and reserve. It must be obvious enough to any who can obtain an opportunity of viewing the subject from the rarely accessible platform of *fact*, that the evils of the double government will not be redressed by giving more power to the Crown Minister, who forms the responsible portion of the Board of Control, and who notoriously devolves the inauguration of most important imperial measures to a few dilletante and irresponsible clerks, whom routine-experience may have enabled to dictate to their often-changed superiors.

I have come to the end of my paper, and I dare say of your patience, though I have by no means delivered myself of all

I had to say. What you will think of the postage of this I know not—Adieu, till next Mail.

Ever, my dear Maxwell,
Affectionately yours,
Q. D.

Soorujpore, — 1853.

☞ With reference to the Criminal Code, and the reports from time to time presented on that matter by the Law Commissioner, let me request your attention to the following statement, sufficiently evidencing the obstructive character of "The Board."

"What was done in consequence of those reports? Nothing that I know of; those reports, I presume, have been sent home, but that I do not know of my own knowledge; I have understood that Sir Edward Ryan recommended to the *Board of Control* that the whole should be settled here; that the Penal Code itself, and those reports, and the criticisms upon which those are criticisms, should be referred to some competent body of men here and decided upon; but that recommendation, I believe, was NOT adopted, and the Code has been sent back again to India as I understand."—*House of Lords—Mr. Cameron's Evidence.*

A SONNET.

(In Imitation of the style of the reign of Charles II.)

Ye withered leaves, that strew this solitude,
'Tis sweet to mark the playful wind that sighs,
Whirl you in dances, amorously rude—
As though with animation 'twere endued.
But sweeter far your rustling voices rise,
When lightly falls the foot, of her I love—
Its magic touch, ye own, with glad surprise!
Now heedless of the breeze that woos above—
And homage offer, in response subdued—
As to some honored Dryad of the wood!
Though now rejected, of your parent trees,
Perchance ye thought, 'twas sweeter far to lie,
At Beauty's feet, that take ignoble ease,
Sporting your green, against the summer sky,
Sweet suicides! for nobler fate ye die!

THE NUDDEA RIVERS.

In 1781, which appears to be the earliest record we have of these rivers, the Nuddea rivers were unnavigable during the dry season. Between that and the close of the 18th century the rivers were occasionally open, but generally unnavigable in the dry season, except for small boats. The next mention that is found of these rivers relates to the Matabangah, which is said to have been open every year, from 1809 to 1818; it is probable that it was then in a more navigable state than either the Jellinghee or Bhaugiruttee, for in 1813 measures for improving its channel were entrusted to the subordinates of the Collector of Nuddea, and to the officers of Police stationed along its banks, and a toll was established to defray the expense of improvements. Little or no good, however, seems to have resulted from whatever means were then used, for, in 1818, the obstructions had become so many and so dangerous, as to cause the wreck of innumerable boats and to entail heavy losses, on account of demurrage paid for detention of ships waiting expected cargoes. The merchants of Calcutta, in that year, urgently petitioned Government that steps might be taken for remedying an evil from which the commercial interests suffered so severely. In consequence Mr. C. K. Robison was appointed Superintendent and Collector of the Matabangah, and commenced his duties in the cold season of 1819-20. In February 1820, he reached the entrance and found it impassable from sand-banks, formed over sunken boats, timbers and wood rafts. These, after great expense and delay, were removed, and by constructing bandhals to narrow the channel, and clearing its course of other obstacles, the river was made navigable to the point where the Como or Katcheekatta river branches off from it to the eastward, carrying away in its bed five-sixths of the supply of water from the Matabangah. An attempt was made to divert a part of the current from the Como river and to force it down the bed of the Matabangah by erecting an embankment across part of the entrance, and by cutting a canal from above the point of separation to rejoin the Matabangah a considerable distance below. The embankment gave way as soon as put up, but Mr. Robison left before the effects of the cut could be ascertained. He was succeeded in the duties of Superintendent by Mr. May, who continued to conduct them with great energy and attention for upwards of 20 years.

In the dry season of 1820-21 a caisson was prepared and sunk, together with a number of old boats, across the mouth of the Como, at a cost of 14,000 rupees. This produced the desired effect, and throughout 1822 three feet of water were obtained over the worst shoals, and boats of 300 maunds passed without difficulty. In 1823 so great were the obstructions in the Matabangah from the encroachment of the Ganges on its southern bank, by which large masses of sand, &c., were forced

into the Matabangah, that it was deemed necessary to open another channel for the passage of boats; operations on the Jellinghee and Bhaugiruttee were consequently commenced upon, but disappointment here met the efforts of Mr. May, for both of these rivers became closed in April 1824. Works were then undertaken to keep open the Bhoirub river; the first outlay on these was Rs. 47,000, which were however nearly all lost by an inundation in 1823, and an additional expenditure of 37,000 Rs. was incurred in their repair. A dredging machine had been previously obtained at a cost of 10,400 Rs.; this however, in consequence of its great draught of water, was almost useless. A second was furnished in 1824 at a cost of 15,000 Rs.; this was employed in the Jellinghee, and by its operations at the head of the river a passage was kept clear for boats.

It would be useless to notice the many shiftings of the various rivers, the Ganges in particular, and also the erection of bandhals continually as they are described in the "Selections from the Records of the Bengal Government," from which we have obtained our details; such would not interest our readers, and would unnecessarily swell out the article. It is our intention now to take merely a cursory view of the operations undertaken to keep the channels clear year by year.

The operations at the junction of the Como with the Matabangah having been found successful, a similar experiment was tried to shut the Pungassy nullah, 8 miles higher up, which drew off a great part of the waters of the Matabangah. The first attempt to do this failed, but a second was made with an outlay of 18,480 rupees, which proved equally unavailing. By means of bandhals, one or other of the three rivers was generally kept navigable for boats of 300 maunds burthen. In 1832 Mr. May furnished the Military Board with a statement of works done on the Nuddea rivers during the previous three years, an abstract of which will show the nature of his labors generally. During that period, 359 bandhals had been constructed, 118 sunken boats removed, 219 sunken trees and timbers, 12 pucka buildings pulled down, and 1731 trees cut down on the banks.

In this report he explained that the extraordinary deviations annually occurring in the course of the Ganges, affecting as they did all the streams that flowed from it, rendered it impossible to lay down any fixed rule of guidance or plan of operations, by which the navigation of the Nuddea rivers could be permanently maintained. An experience of 13 years had convinced him that the changes which took place in the great river during one inundation afforded no data to determine what the next would bring forth, and therefore there was no assurance that the measures adopted for mitigating or repairing the evils of one season would be of the least avail in the ensuing one. Much had been done to facilitate the navigation by the immediate removal of all incidental obstructions, such as a rise from deposits of sand carried down from broken banks, sunken boats, trees, timbers, or fragments of masonry, all, unless immediately cleared away, productive of serious injury, by accelerating the

lodgment of alluvial and other substances, and the formation of impassable obstructions. The existence of small churs separating the water into several channels, and the extension also of the current over a broad surface, alike produce shoals which have to be overcome by shutting up in the former case, all but one channel, and in the latter, by narrowing the stream by the erection of bandhals. These, when properly placed, often produce the desired effect of giving one or two feet additional depth; but from the exceeding looseness of the soil through which the Nuddea rivers flow, it is not unusual to find that the sand carried away by the increased velocity of the current within the bandhals, is borne down stream to form a new shoal when another bandhal must be erected, and the process repeated till some deep pool occurs into which the silt can subside without doing mischief. Dredging machinery can only be usefully employed where the stream is rapid. In sluggish water, wherever a bucket-full is raised, it is instantly replaced by the falling in of the surrounding mass. The utility of dredging in the Nuddea rivers consists in stirring up the sand for the current to carry away, not in the quantity lifted out of their beds.

In 1835 doubts seem to have been entertained whether the benefits that accrued from the works carried on were commensurate with the expense incurred. The establishment was, therefore, directed to be discharged; and Mr. May was appointed to examine and report upon three lines of the country from the Guroy river at Koostee to the Hooghly, with a view to determine whether a permanent water communication from the Ganges to Calcutta could be established by means of a locked canal.

In consequence of the discontinuance of all operations on the rivers no report of their state was made till June 1836, when Mr. May was again directed to furnish information on certain points connected with them, and in June 1837, he was re-appointed superintendent, it having been found that a channel could not be kept open without the constant vigilance and supervision of an experienced European Officer.

In August 1840, Mr. May's health having failed, he resigned his office, and Captain Smyth, of the Engineers, was appointed in his room. The same measures were adopted by this officer in clearing and keeping open the channel as those adopted by his predecessor, and with the like success, one channel being at all times available for navigation.

In 1847-48 Captain Lang officiated for the Superintendent, and his interesting report noticing the position of almost every shoal in the whole length of the rivers under his charge, we should transfer bodily to our pages were we not aware that sand-banks are treacherous things, and that perhaps not one of those mentioned in the report as having existed in 1848, is now in the position there assigned to it. A new cut was opened in March 1847, which in the rains became the main entrance of the Bhaugiruttee.

In addition to the operations for clearing the channel of shoals, and for preventing corrosion of sand-banks by the construction of bandhals, the following statement

exhibits the number and description of other obstacles removed from the bed of the three rivers during 1847-48 :—

	Sunken Boats removed.	*Trees and Timbers removed.*	*Trees cut down on River Banks.*
Bhaugiruttee, ...	59	84	138
Jellinghee, ...	37	2	40
Matabangah, ...	0	3	17

It appears that these rivers are navigated by upwards of 80,000 boats annually (exclusive of those that do not pay toll). 2,070 laden boats paid toll at Jungypore, between 21st December, 1847, to 10th January, 1848, to the amount of Rs. 7,410. Of these, 468 boats were between 1,000 and 3,200 maunds burden, laden with grain, salt, saltpetre, indigo, cotton, sugar, &c. The amount of toll collected in 1848, the expense of collection, the pay of establishment and outlay on account of operations, were as follows :—

Collections.

Bhaugiruttee, ...	1,51,482	1	9			
Jellinghee, ...	63,222	14	3			
Matabangah, ...	24,028	11	9			
				2,38,733	11	9
Expenditure for facilitating the Navigation, ...	36,122	7	9			
Collections of Tolls,........................	22,360	5	1			
				58,482	12	10
			Net surplus Rs.	1,80,250	15	7

The average annual surplus for the eight preceding years was Rs. 1,65,092.

SENT OUT TO INDIA.

A TALE.

(By the Author of "My Uncle Ben's Courtships.")

Chapter VII.

VISITORS.

THE sun rose high and warm over the plains of Dust-i-nuggur. The flag that had "braved a thousand years the battle and the breeze" hung motionless on the Fort flagstaff, as though (with all its hardihood) grown feeble and tired out at last. The few trees which dotted the landscape here and there, and relieved its flatness without much adding to its beauty, were covered with a thick coating of brown dust. Occasionally a bullock cart laden with grass or firewood would pass lazily along,—the driver nearly or quite asleep, and the oxen moving with a slow and dignified tread that seemed quite in keeping with the character of the scene. In a muddy pool near some native huts, three or four buffaloes were enjoying the delights of bathing, and rolled about luxuriously in the slimy fluid, and ever and anon poked up their innocent heads with an expression of mute felicity. A native youth who was apparently in charge of them lay asleep on the bank, undisturbed by any fear of their taking French leave during his slumber. From the huts came the monotonous sound of women grinding corn and singing over their work. In the Palace the fat Rajah lay out-stretched at his ease, wooing an early siesta, and grunting with pleasure as his attendants fanned his intelligent face, or brushed away the flies that *would* buzz about his intellectual head, and try his sweet temper.

It was about noon. In the Major's drawing-room sat the lady of the mansion, with her daughters and nieces. The drawing-room was a handsomely-furnished apartment; with chandeliers, pictures, mirrors, carpets, damask couches, marble tables, easy chairs, and indeed all that comfort could suggest or luxury require. There was a profusion of elegantly worked "anti-macassars," and gorgeously embroidered little cushions, upon the couches and chairs. On the tables were flower-vases more beautiful than the flowers they contained; scent bottles splendidly gilt; and dazzlingly-bound volumes, full of fine engravings and aristocratic contributions in poetry and prose. Over the piano there hung a large oil-painting by Schwartzenberg (a celebrated German Artist who had spent three of the best years of his existence in India), representing Mrs. Major Devigne in the first year of her married life,—an unwinged Angel in a blue satin dress, with a diamond brooch in her bosom, and a gold watch by her side. Near this celestial object was a smaller picture (by Jones the younger), being the portrait of Miss Fanny when three years old,—a little pale thing, with light eyes, and very light hair, and a light frock,

and light shoes, playing with a large black Newfoundland dog that seemed capable of eating her up, clothes and all, without in the smallest degree affecting his digestion. The room was a good deal darkened, to keep out the glare of the midday sun.

"I told you we should have visitors to-day," said Mrs. Devigne, as a carriage drove up to the door. "The Flirters, I have no doubt."

Cards were brought in, which affirmed the correctness of the lady's conjecture. It was Mr. Cæsar St. George Flirter, Collector and Magistrate of Dust-i-Nuggur, with his wife and daughter, who now entered the room. He was not like either Cæsar or St. George, though named after both those notabilities. He was of small, not to say diminutive, stature, and had a lean and hungry look, which was not improved by the peculiarity of his mouth remaining habitually open. The natives, when told that Satan was always going about seeking whom he might devour, said slyly to themselves that the Collector was the devil. But this was a libel upon Flirter, who, if one of the ugliest, was at least one of the most harmless, little fellows alive. His whole heart and soul was in geology; and the anxious and craving expression which his countenance exhibited was owing in no small measure to the nature of the researches in which he had been engaged from his youth upwards. For he took infinitely more interest in a rocky formation than in the formation of a ministry; and had been heard to say that in the whole course of his official career, no question, revenue or judicial, had ever come before him, comparable in importance to one which happened to arise between himself and Captain Granton, as to whether a particular fossil which had been sent to him from England belonged to the Cretaceous or the Carboniferous system. Mrs. Flirter was a good-natured soul, who knew nothing of these abstruse subjects, but who nevertheless entertained a high opinion of her husband's wisdom and judgment in all matters of a scientific kind. She had thought—worthy creature!—until undeceived by her lord and master, that Mica Schist was the name of a German Lady,—that gypsum was Latin for gypsey,—and that her husband was incurring considerable danger in braving every kind of "trap," as he seemed to be in the habit of doing. Miss Catherine Flirter was an only child, and was allowed to do precisely as she liked: so she became completely her mother's mistress, and gained so strong a hold of the affections of her father, that she could even laugh at his researches, and make light of his discoveries, without in the least disturbing his philosophical equanimity.

Miriam and Louise were presented in due form to these worthy people, who would perhaps have interested them more if their conversation had been of a more elevated kind. But it happened that Mrs. Flirter was going to give a Ball to the people of the Station, and could think and talk of nothing else; whilst her daughter was only interested in tidings of certain persons at the Presidency, whom the girls had never heard of; and as for the good Collector he contented himself with uttering a few common-places, in a fashion

which seemed to indicate that his mind was wandering with Murchison, Mantell, and Miller, or some other kindred spirits, through the realms of the Silurian and Old Red Sandstone systems, with an occasional excursion into the interesting Kingdom of the Wealden, or a dive down into the dark region of metamorphic rocks.

Happily the Major soon made his appearance, and Captain Granton and Ensign Prettyman were announced; so that matters began to take a more lively and intelligent turn.

Wilfred Granton was a man of about two or three-and-thirty, slightly above the middle height, and with a particularly prepossessing exterior and gentlemanly manner. He had dark earnest eyes, and a resolute expression about the mouth which no smile could entirely hide. He talked admirably, was at a loss upon no topic, and in the turns which he gave the conversation, always contrived to lead it back from trifling into the ways of common sense. More than this, he did not fall into the vice of many fluent speakers, who are so enamoured of their own glibness, that they keep all the talk to themselves. He could listen as well as converse, and he did so to ladies with an air of respectful attention, that often won him many friends—for it may be regarded as a general rule, that women like rather to be heard patiently, intelligently, and politely, than to be compelled to smile at the platitudes, and laugh over the absurdities, which many mistaken practitioners of the "art of pleasing" dispense for their gratification. Evidently, he had gathered a large stock of information from books, as well as much experience of a practical kind from personal observation of men and things. He could sing well, was a master-hand with his pencil; and being of a poetical turn, had more than once assisted Ensign Prettyman in his attempts to depict lyrically the death of the bison, or the mortal struggles of the discomfited boar. He associated a great deal with the people of the station, was a special favorite of the Major's; had many an interesting conversation with Flirter about Echinodermata, Cephalopoda, and the like; and was even not incapable of sustaining an argument with Staples, the Cotton Planter, on the prospects of introducing the "New Orleans variety" into general cultivation in India, and thereby regenerating this vast country, and shutting the huge mouth of Manchester for ever.

After some well-turned compliments to Mrs. Devigne and her daughters, Granton entered into conversation with Miriam and Louise upon the incidents of their voyage, and their first impressions of Indian life, and was evidently well pleased with the frank unembarrassed manner in which they answered his enquiries.

"Ah!" said he, "it is the unextinguishable love of home that spoils us Indians, after all. Nothing permanently reconciles us to the adopted country. Whatever our position or our prospects, we cannot avoid looking forward to the 'good time coming' when we *may* bid an eternal adieu to the land that has been the theatre of our actions perhaps for upwards of a quarter of a century. Now my theory is, that we, whose

lot is cast here, ought to repress as far as possible this intense longing to be gone, and endeavor to look upon India as a home, and upon our return to England as a remote contingency, dependent upon that oddest of all the odd chapters of life—the Chapter of Accidents."

"" Ah, la !" cried Mrs. Flirter, quite startled by this novel view of an old question, " what a *very* strange man you are, Captain Granton."

" Why, ma'am," continued Granton, " there are so few old Indians who really do enjoy life when they get home, that it makes one's heart bleed to reflect upon the huge waste of opportunities, and sacrifice of good resolutions, that must have been committed, to secure such a small modicum of eventual happiness. You recollect Bunyan of the Civil Service, Major, who went home after passing thirty-seven years in this country, determined to 'enjoy himself and no mistake,' and fancying that the climate of his native land would give him a new and long lease of life, at a peppercorn rent, or something less. Well, poor fellow, the first winter laid him upon his back with influenza, and he passed at least six weeks in a close room, with his head bound up, and his lower extremities swathed in flannel; and lived during that period upon insipid gruels and tasteless jellies; recovering, at last, owing to the return of spring, and in spite of the Doctors. In the summer, imagining himself well again, he went out imprudently to play at cricket, and got unduly heated, when rheumatism floored him for a good month. Then,—limping like a lamed hare, and reduced from thirteen stone to ten and a half,—he struggled over to Paris, and with the help of a walking stick, surveyed daily the glories of the Boulevards. Temptation was too much for the old gentleman. There was one particular *restaurant* where an old Calcutta friend induced him one day to dine,—a really noble place of entertainment, where the furniture was magnificent, the civilities matchless, the dinners inimitable, and the wines perfection. Here Bunyan resolved to feast daily,—and he did so for a time, testing all the varied refinements of French cookery, and leaving not a wine untasted, from the choicest products of the Rhine to the most delicate vintages of the sunny South. One afternoon he was missed: the worthy gourmand had eaten just a *paté* too much—had drunk just one more glass of Beaune than agreed with him,—and by midnight he was in the hands of the Doctor, raving about rice and curry, the Company's Regulations, mangoes, hookahs, and the Sudder Adawlut. Poor Bunyan is now trying the cold water cure, and wishing, from the bottom of his soul, at every shivering plunge he takes, and every new mountain of blanket that is piled on him, that he had never quitted despised India."

" An extreme case, Granton," said the Major.

" Certainly there are many persons who live very happily at home, after having passed half their lives in India," observed the Major's lady, who was thinking of a trip to England herself, 'some day,' and could not therefore endure to hear anything that seem-

ed to run counter to her cherished wish.

"Surely your picture is rather darkly colored, sir," remarked Miriam.

"Oh! I have a still more dismal one than that," said Granton, laughingly. "There was General Howitzer, who served in the first Burmese war: he waited till he had made a clear two thousand a year, and then declared that he would go home and spend the autumn of his life happily among the friends of his youth. He died at Malta, did General Howitzer; and the friends of his youth, instead of assisting him to spend the autumn of his life, lent a helping-hand in spending his money."

"Really, I can't help laughing," exclaimed Miss Elizabeth, putting her handkerchief to her mouth, "you tell the story in such a droll way; though of course it must have been a sad thing for the poor General."

"When I go home," said Flirter, looking vacantly at a specimen of laterite which fancy painted in the air, "I shall devote myself to geology, and establish my quarters in some pleasant district, where I can go out every morning with my hammer, and bring home something worth preserving."

"And where we can have a nice little poney Phaeton," suggested his better-half, "and invite our friends every now and then to a picnic."

"How much better," Ensign Prettyman ventured to remark to Flirter, "it would be to take one's gun, or one's fishing rod, and bring home partridges or trout, than to go out chipping off useless bits of stone with a hammer."

"Use—less!" cried Flirter, opening his mouth at the astonished Ensign, as though he were preparing to swallow him. "I—never—heard such a remark; no—never." And the good Collector gazed up at the ceiling in a perfect fit of scientific astonishment.

"I declare," said Mrs. Flirter to the incautious Ensign, "we've the prettiest cabinet of specimens in the Presidency. My husband has arranged them all *so* neatly, and put such nice little labels upon them, that they look prettier even than —— than a collection of shells."

The conversation having now reached a point where it seemed desirable to change it, Granton turned to Miss Flirter, who had been sitting all the while primly and silently—perhaps inwardly contemplating her own perfections—and asked if she were still as great a horsewoman, and as passionately fond of riding, as ever? His good-natured intention, however, was baffled by the young lady's reply.

"Oh! yes," said she, "it is a noble exercise; only when I go out with papa, you know, he will persist in galloping off to that hill where he found the fossil, and when he gets there, there's no persuading him to come away again. So really the ride becomes wearisome from its sameness."

"It was a most extraordinary bone," observed the geologist, "that had evidently lain in the earth since a period long anterior to the creation of man, and belonged to some gigantic species of animal now extinct. I sent it three mails ago to Professor Owen, and am anxiously expecting an account of it."

"I wanted him," said Mrs. Flirter aside to Louise, "to cut off a bit before it went away, to make a snuff-box of, for really it was such a wonderful thing, and when polished, it would have looked quite pretty. But he said that if it were at all mutilated, the Professor might be puzzled, so it went home entire. I hope that if they do discover what animal it belonged to, they'll in justice name the creature after Mr. Flirter."

Ensign Prettyman, who had never yet 'fleshed his maiden sword,' and who, like the war-horse, smelt the battle from afar, here enquired of the Major what was the latest news from the frontier, and whether there was any prospect of a 'brush' in that quarter.

The Major replied that the intelligence was perhaps not much to be depended on, but a Cossid had come in that morning with news that the two brothers who were struggling for authority had fought a battle, which had created an awful noise, and no small amount of dust, and that the result being indecisive, one of them had had the impudence to cross the frontier line, and seize a small fort belonging to one of our allies, putting its feeble garrison to flight. Should this be true, the Major considered that the orders received some time since would quite justify the Political Agent in making a requisition for troops.

"I wish they'd give me command of some of the Rajah's men," said the eager Ensign. "I'll be bound I'd soon give a good account of the Lalpugree rascals."

"La!" cried Miss Betsey, "the Rajah's troops are only for show. They would all run away at the first sight of the enemy."

"Government would never have allowed the Rajah to retain even the few armed followers he has," observed Major Devigne, if it had not been quite certain that they would be perfectly useless, except to amuse His Highness with the shadow of bye-gone power. I have often thought, when watching the ill-mounted rascals exercising on the plain, how they would all scamper off, helter-skelter, in the most ludicrous terror, if only one resolute swordsman were to make a sudden dash in amongst them. Betsey is quite right: they are only intended for show, not for use."

Miss Fanny, who had been listening quietly to the conversation, as was her wont, here very nearly ventured on the remark that Captain Canter, of the Irregulars, might probably put down the disturbances if the authorities would let him try; but she checked herself in good time, thinking of the dear sweet little dog he had given her, and apprehensive lest somebody in power might act upon her suggestion, and send off the gallant officer to be killed in the wars, or so scarred and disfigured by sword-cuts and gun-shot wounds as to spoil his manly beauty for ever. Fanny was more than half in love with the dashing Canter; and (such is sometimes the strange association of ideas) the object of her regard was inextricably mixed up in her mind with the image of Byron,—the little dog,—so that she never thought of one without thinking of the other.

After a little more conversation on unimportant topics, Mrs. Flir-

ter expressed a desire to see Master Tom, who was accordingly sent for, and came in, under charge of Mrs. Comfit, pouting dreadfully, and with his head hanging down, evidently not at all liking to be made an exhibition of.

"Dear little fellow!" exclaimed Mrs. Flirter. "Come here and speak to me. I've brought you something nice!"

The excellent lady here took a little bottle of lozenges from her reticule, which Master Tom eyed askance, while a conflict (almost as severe as that which agitated the Lalpugree frontier) arose in his infantile breast, an obstinate "shyness" impelling him to hold back from Mrs. Flirter, and an unconquerable passion for sweetmeats simultaneously urging him to approach the bottle which she held in her hand. The principle of attraction at last carried the day. Master Tom moved up slowly, and got possession of the bottle; then was seized by the lady and kissed against his will; and then was hurried off by Mrs. Comfit, to prevent his roaring out against the unexpected infliction; the bottle having to be opened and discharged of half its contents for the pacification of the young gentleman, before the carriage of the first visitor moved away from the door.

Chapter III.

THE FINE LADY'S HOUSEHOLD.

It need scarcely be said that Miriam and Louise felt terribly the contrast between the gaieties and luxuries with which they were now surrounded, and the simple comforts of the quiet home they had enjoyed in Elfwood. There was a continual bustle, a reckless profusion, and a marked want of order in Mrs. Devigne's establishment. The Major did not at all interfere in her household arrangements, his sole apparent use, in connexion therewith, being to supply the money requisite to defray the expenses which they entailed. He had a saying that a married couple resembled the figure 10—a bachelor being a mere unit, and a spinster a cypher, and union giving them all their social value and strength. In his own case however, the cypher and unit seemed to have changed places, for there could be no question that his lady, in the Bungalow at Dust-i-nuggur, was "Monarch of all she surveyed." Major Devigne's theory was that any sacrifice should be made to secure a quiet life, a life free from trouble, anxiety, and agitating differences of opinion; and in carrying this out in practice, he found it necessary to resign, with all the cares of management, nearly every particle and vestige of domestic authority, into the hands of his wife. He rose early, and took his morning ride and cup of coffee, but except in case of visitors, he seldom made his appearance between breakfast time, (when the sun of the house rose to pale his ineffectual fire) and seven in the evening, when the family dined. Mrs. Devigne occasionally made a show of consulting him upon household matters, but the invariable response which he gave, "Do as you like,

my dear,—you understand such things much better than I do,—and you know I can't bear being troubled," stopped her on the threshhold, and seemed to proclaim a settled policy of non-interference. Indulgent to a fault, his daughters always knew where to find him when suffering from any severity or unkindness on the part of their mama ; and upon such occasions, the girls, who would go sobbing into his room, never failed to come out with a light step, and smiling through their tears. Master Tom, too, a young gentleman of strong instincts, was cognizant of a certain drawer, in which his papa kept, for his especial delectation, a varied supply of biscuits, ginger-bread nuts, and sweetmeats ; and whenever missing in other parts of the house, Tom would be pretty sure to be discovered in the Major's room, with a besmeared face, and sticky fingers, making a royal feast upon such dainties. It was surprising (to those privileged to know it) how comfortable the Major made himself during those hours when he seemed to have disappeared altogether from the Establishment. In the hot weather, he would take off his coat and neck-cloth, set the punkah going, and ensconce himself in the easiest of all easy chairs, where he would read a book, or the newspaper, with infinite enjoyment. Half asleep, he would be suddenly awakened by his son and heir, sidling in gently, with an evident intention to abstract some of the contents of the well known drawer. Or perhaps Flirter or Granton would call, to have half an hour's agreeable chat, and smoke one or two of the Major's cheroots, by far the oldest and best in the station. Sometimes he would give audience to a native petitioner, who (presenting an incomprehensible memorial, written, in a flourishing hand, over seven pages of foolscap) would beseech his honor's goodness to interfere with the political agent on his behalf, and obtain for him a situation of twenty-five rupees per month, in which the last incumbent had made a rapid fortune, by savings out of his pay. The Major was never at a loss for something to do, and as he was a man who looked persistently at the bright side of things, and whom it was easy to satisfy, and difficult to offend, we really think he enjoyed, upon the whole, as much happiness as falls to the share of most persons. He might have been happier, the reader will say. But who might not? If we have not all of us vain extravagant wives, we doubtless have some other matter or thing to complain of, the absence of which would materially increase our felicity here below. It is commendable philosophy to make the best of an indifferent lot; and Major Devigne, if not perfectly successful in this object, at least deserved credit for an earnest endeavor to attain it.

The Lady of the Mansion, full of personal vanity as she was, unjust in her estimates of her friends, and haughty and imperious towards her servants, failed, perhaps most of all where success was most important, namely, in the management of her children. The sham sentiment, the false morality, the perverted principle, that were apparent in the precepts they gathered from her words, or deduced from her acts, were things for angels to weep over. Her grand

aim seemed to be to get good husbands for the girls: that is, husbands possessing station, wealth, and brilliant prospects. To affect this master-purpose, every effort was used, and every possible sacrifice made. An expensive house, a huge tribe of servants—frequent parties—and an unquenchable zeal for the promotion of local gaities, —were considered absolutely necessary for the advancement of the best interests of her daughters. Jewellery they must have; handsome dresses they must have; riding horses they must have; "accomplishments" they must have; otherwise, how on earth could they be expected to marry well? Poor Fanny had the misfortune to have shoulders of unequal height, and do what she could, one of them *would* obstinately slip out of her dress, and give her figure a one-sided kind of look. Finding all her exertions futile to correct the error which Nature had made, Mrs. Devigne was weak enough to regard the defect as a species of crime in Fan; and that unfortunate young lady was sometimes scolded for it to such an extent, as to make her fervently wish she had been born without any shoulders at all! Elizabeth being unexceptionable as regards figure, and having an attractive face, and a naturally forward manner, Mrs. Devigne felt assured her younger daughter *must*, sooner or later, obtain a good match, and therefore experienced comparatively little solicitude about *her*. But Fanny's matrimonial chances were a source of continual anxiety to this devoted mother. At the time we write of, it happened that some slight attention,—imperceptible perhaps to anybody else, but unmistakeable in Mrs. Devigne's Argus-eyes, had been paid to Fan by Captain Canter of the Irregular Horse. Canter was not perhaps entitled, in a general sense, to be considered a first-rate match: still, as his emoluments were good, and as he had *interest* (being a distant connection of the Governor General) the lady—reflecting upon the shortcomings of her daughter—was pleased to pronounce him passably eligible, and to determine in her own mind that she would bring about an alliance between him and the fair-haired damsel. She set to work, therefore, "with a will;" praised him constantly and fulsomely to poor Fan; invited him repeatedly to dinner; lavished admiration on his horses and his dogs; dilated often and warmly upon the young lady's excellences of heart (as if *she* could judge of them); and even went so far as to give Fanny a few lessons concerning the manner in which she might extract from him an avowal, or at least indication, of his sentiments. Canter little knew into what intricate and dangerous toils he had allowed himself to be drawn; but his unimpressionable nature in all likelihood preserved him from capture, where a cleverer and more susceptible person would have fallen an easy prey to the accomplished huntress. The most dexterous artifices, designed to entrap him at some unguarded moment, were entirely thrown away upon him. Standing six feet two without his boots; boasting a moustache and beard of glossy blackness and imposing dimensions; and entitled to wear a particularly showy and handsome uniform,—it is possible that he had too much to think

of in connection with his own beloved person, to be able to exhibit any great amount of devotion to another. In truth, he was not a man of many ideas. A capital Cavalry officer, he understood horses thoroughly, and could rough-ride any colt that mortal mare ever foaled. He likewise knew a thing or two about dogs. With respect to sport, there was not a better shot in Western India; and Ensign Prettyman looked up to him as a sort of modern incarnation of Nimrod, and would have given all he possessed to be a tithe as successful and as famous. But he had read nothing (except the Sporting Magazine and a few works on Veterinary Surgery) since leaving school; and having apparently a notion that the proper study of mankind was—not man, but horses, he came in contact with numbers of brother officers and fellow beings without gaining any insight into human character. In short, when you saw the outward form of Canter, you saw all there was of him. Out of other men might be extracted the music of poetry, the flow of wit, the flash of genius,—but no colloquial chemistry could draw any thing of the sort from this Captain of Cavalry. It is not to be wondered at that Mrs. Devigne occasionally lost her temper in endeavouring to reduce such an unpromising block to the form and proportions of a lover for her daughter. He blunted her tools and baffled her artistic skill, indeed, so completely, that with all her energy, perseverance, and hopefulness, she sometimes felt half inclined to give up the work in despair. "If Fan could only put a little expression into those eyes," she would say pettishly, "and utter half-a-dozen words in a tone that didn't freeze them before they left her lips, perhaps even Canter might be thawed into an approach to sensibility. But she *will* be so inanimate and so taciturn—and he is so dull, and stiff, and incapable of emotion,—that really it is enough to break a mother's heart!"

Nor was this the sole vexation by which the spirit of the fine lady was tried. Master Tom often annoyed her exceedingly. She loved her little boy "not wisely but too well," and treated him in such a manner as to develop in him those very qualities which she least wished to see. Tom would be self-willed and disobey orders; when his mama would administer a little corporal chastisement as a corrective, whipping made him cry; and crying had such an effect upon Mrs. Devigne's nerves, that she found it necessary to kiss and bribe him into silence. Severity towards him on the part of others she would not suffer at all; and he thus contrived to get the "upper hand" of the ayahs, and to set the authority of his sisters at defiance. "He must be sent to England, dear little fellow," she would sometimes say, "for I am the only person who can manage him here, and really I have so much to vex and worry me, that the task is almost beyond my powers."

Environed by troubles great and small, it was an undoubted advantage to Mrs. Devigne to have a sort of target in her establishment, at which, when she fell out of humour, she could safely discharge the arrows of her spleen. This target was at pre-

sent the governess,—Miss Meek. If Fanny's hair got out of curl, or Betsey broke down in her singing lesson, or Master Tom cut his finger, or Byron worried Pamela (the Persian cat), or the cook fell sick, or the dhobee spoiled a muslin dress, or any other equally important misadventure occurred,—Miss Meek was sure to be the principal sufferer. Nay, so thoroughly vicarious a position did this "young person" hold, that Mrs. Devigne could not even have the slightest headache, without the governess being made painfully cognizant of the fact, by a scolding or a snubbing about something or other that had no earthly connection with headaches.

Miriam and Louise saw all these things before they had been long beneath their uncle's roof, and we need not say that they deeply lamented them, and did their best to mitigate the evils arising from their aunt's vain, capricious, and imperious temper. But alas! they were only dependents themselves, and did not know how soon they might fall under the fine lady's displeasure, with which others were often so causelessly and unjustly visited. As for Mrs. Comfit, the impressions made upon her experienced mind by her first month's sojourn at Dust-i-nuggur may be better gathered from the following letter, which she carefully indited to her friend Mrs. Pettitoe, the housekeeper at Elfdale, than from any description of our's.

Dusty Nuggur,
——18—.

My dear Friend,—You will not be surprised at hearing from me, for I know your hopeful and sanguinary temperament, but to myself it is a matter of astonishment that I am alive at this moment to enter into correspondence with you. I never approved of Mr. Devigne sending his daughters to the Indies, and was certain we should have to undergo many trials and commotions. It is true, my dear Mrs. Pettitoe, that many things which I prophesied have not yet come to pass. Neither of the dear young ladies—thanks to Providence!—has been torn away from us by cholera or snakes; and for all the tales I read in the Penny Magazine, and Jenkinses Travels in Java, I have not so much as seen a single tiger. But I must not boast too soon, or cry before we are out of the wood. We have had sufferings to endure compared to which even tigers and snakes would be welcome. When I was in Bombay I sent you an account of the horrors of our voyage, and how I suffered from seasickness, and sentrypedes, and the insolence of Thomas the cuddy servant, for which that ill-conditioned reprobate has never been punished to this day! Since then, what have we not had to go through! We did not stay long in Bombay, and I did not see much of it while we were there, but quite enough to convince me that it was not the place for my money. It is swarming with people, who die off at the rate of about thirty a day, and yet seem as thick as ever,—a fact which *I* think is attributable to the prolificalness of the female gender. The Fort is like a washing-tub filled and running over; and the native town is a perfect forest of dirty houses, and streets, and lanes, where I've seen sights, my dear friend,

and smelt smells, which could scarcely be matched in Skibbereen or Cologne. It is a very dear place too, and no politeness to be met with in the shops, where, instead of seeing a good-looking well-dressed young man, cleanly shaved, and with his hair oiled and nicely parted, who makes you a bow from behind the counter, and overwhelms you with his obsequious civilities, you meet with a black-bearded heathen, who looks at you surreptitiously as though he doubted your honesty, and sells you a bit of ribbon or a pair of stockings at three times the English price, with the air of a person conferring a favour. I dare say the shop-keepers are civil enough to great ladies like Mrs. Devigne: but to the like of me they were just as independent as Nabobs, never asking me to take a seat when I went in, or making me a bow when I went out, or so much as saying—"Good morning, ma'am, much obliged, hope to have the pleasure of seeing you again." And to think that these are the fellows for whom we are subscribing our six-pences and shillings at home, in order to send out Missionaries and schoolmasters, to give them the benefit of Christian civilization! The Borers (who are a sort of Pedlar) were a good deal politer to me than the Indians in the shops. They go about with large baskets containing a stock of everything, (such as pickles and blacking-brushes, combs and soda powders, muslin-de-laine for dresses, essence of ginger for colic, prayer-books, cork-screws, preserved sardines, buttons, peppermint lozenges, hair-oil, bridles, flannel waistcoats, and writing-paper,) and really are a very useful race of men in their way, although it is necessary to be extremely cautious in dealing with them, as they ask a million per cent. more than their things are worth, and have no more conscience than Jews. One can speak very plainly to them, and they do not at all mind being called rascals and rogues, which is a sad proof of their degradation.

Mrs. Devigne, the Major's lady, spent a mint of money while the family were in Bombay, and the stock of beautiful things she took away with her might have sufficed to set up a shop at the station here. I dare say the good old gentleman, her husband, was glad enough when she shifted her quarters. What a woman she is, to be sure! For dress and for talk, I never saw her equal. It may be insidious in me to mention it, but I don't think she is quite so great a lady as she tries to make people believe. I've seen a little of society, you know, having lived once with Lady Gosling, and observed the manners of the Duckleys and Drakefords, as well as heard her ladyship converse with the Duke of Dillwater, who was the most perfect gentleman of his time. And without wishing to be a censer, I must say Mrs. D. sometimes uses most equivalent expressions, and throws herself into attitudes which are more mellow-dramatic than graceful. It is melancholy to see how she brings up her daughters—little chits that ought to be at school, but who are taught nothing from morning to night but what may assist them in getting husbands. Neither Fanny nor Betsey can cut out a shirt, or even darn a stocking, and

they are both as ignorant as kittens of cookery in all its branches. Just fancy them emmigrating to Australia, and doing for themselves in wigwams, instead of living out here in luxury, with an ayah to dress their hair, and a servant to pick up their pocket-handkerchief when it happens to fall! It may come to that yet, Mrs. Pettitoe, for unless their father is a regular Alchemist, and has discovered the art of transmigrating the base metals into gold, he never *can* stand the run upon his purse which is caused by his lady's extravagance. I should not like to eat their first pudding, I know. The squaws of Van Demon's Land are far better educated, savages as they are!

What a dreadful journey we had from Bombay to Dusty Nuggur! My bones ache yet at the thoughts of it. Don't fancy we came by railway, or stage-coach, or 'bus, for the Lord help them! they've no such things in this barbarous region,—not even a hackney coach, or a respectable cab. We came partly in palankeens, and partly in carriages; and part of the way, which was over precipitate mountains, I actually rode on a poney. The roads were either covered with dust a foot thick, or else full of ruts and stones; and I was so shaken, and jolted, and knocked about, that I frequently felt myself crack as though I were going to pieces. Then the places we put up at—which are not regular inns, but houses they call travellers' bungalows—were so dirty, and so full of fleas, and other dreadful insects, that one could neither eat nor drink with comfort, while sleeping was altogether out of the question. And such food they gave us! soup that seemed made of leather and onions; fowls as tough as gutter percher; bacon that appeared to have been kept for a quarter of a century; curries that were made of nobody-knows-what, brought from nobody-knows-where; and puddings of the most singular look and taste. Ugh! it gives me a cold shudder to think of them now. The young ladies stood the journey pretty well—but *I*——I said to myself, "what a fool you are, Margaret Comfit, to have come on a wild-goose chase like this, and to be exploring foreign parts against your will, eating sour bread and stale eggs, and running the risk of being cut off in the prime of your life by a fall down a precipice, or an attack from the robbers of the jungle. It will make you look ten years older, and mayhap take ten years from your life—this single unprofitable expedition!"

However (Heaven be praised!) I reached Dusty Nuggur without being either poisoned at the travellers' bungalows, or strangulated by the Thugs; and here I consider myself bound, as a matter of duty, to stay, until Miss Miriam and Miss Louise get married, or go home again. For really I am their sole protector. The Major (entry noo) is afraid of his wife; and I am inclined to think Mrs. D. would soon show her airs to the young ladies; if she did not rather stand in awe of me. I have told her a bit of my mind once or twice. One day I was talking to Miss Fanny in the verandah, when Captain Canter (the person her mama wants her to marry), came in, and Mrs. D. just turned round to me, and said, "You had better go to your room,

Comfit." "Of course, ma'am," says I, "I'll go to my room; but I'm kept a good deal too much sequestrated in this house, and I don't care if you know it. You won't let me do anything. If I wash Master Thomas's face, you say I'm interfering with the ayahs. If I offer to make a custard or a jelly, you say the Butler will be discontented. If I give a word of advice to Miss Fanny or Miss Elizabeth, you say you have already one Governess for your daughters, and that's enough. Why shouldn't you let me make myself useful! I feel quite degenerate, sometimes, when I think over my situation here." Ay, I said all that to her, and more: and I saw Captain Canter open his eyes and his mouth, and shut them again, just as though he was astounded at my audacity.

Well, my dear Friend, I have got to the end of my paper, and must say good-bye. Remember me to my friends and acquaintances in Elfdale, and say that I hope some day to see them again, though doubtless, what with my cares and troubles, they'll find me much debilitated. Don't forget the old Gardener: he would be surprised if he could see the plantains growing and the prickly pear! Read my letter over to Miss Trimmer, and tell her that my lavender silk cape, which she made me, is completely spoilt with perspiration, owing to the thermometer, which has been several times up to Zero already. So no more at present from

Your attached Friend,

MARGARET COMFIT.

Chapter IX.

MRS. FLIRTER'S BALL.

NATURE, who delights in variety, perhaps never made two persons more decidedly unlike in all essential respects than the Major's lady and Mrs. Flirter. The former lived an artificial life amidst her finery and ostentation: the latter was one of the most unpretending, simple-minded creatures that ever breathed. It was popularly said that she belonged to a former age, when the world was innocent and young, and that Flirter had found her in a fossil state, and got her restored in some mysterious way to existence, in order that she might accompany him through life, and prevent him from breaking his head against the stones in which he was constantly burrowing. The young men of the station laughed—as knowing young fellows, with their large and varied experience, *will* laugh—at the simplicity of a woman visibly passing through the world without losing aught of the bloom of her mental freshness by contact with mundane things; but they acknowledged her at heart to be a "good little creature," and had sufficient respect for the very want of worldliness they ridiculed, to disarm their playful satire of any sting. As a peacemaker she was quite famous. She had healed many a dissension and prevented many a quarrel: not perhaps because she took the wisest possible view of cases in which she interfered, but because she set about the work in such a

gentle and amiable way, that none but the most churlish could resent her interposition, and it seemed to people to be quite an ungracious thing to go on wrangling after Mrs. Flirter had tried to make them friends. Neither was she chary of her advice to young people, upon whom she bestowed her counsel in a smiling, maternal kind of manner, that made them love their monitor, even when they disregarded her recommendations.

The Flirters were very hospitable to the people of the Station and its neighbourhood,—often, indeed, extending their civilities to persons whom Mrs. Major Devigne, in her lofty judgment, thought it quite beneath them to patronise,—so that when the news of the coming Ball was spread abroad, it was agreeable to witness how much pleasure it created, and how few remarks of a censorious and carping character it gave rise to. We have often heard tidings of a like sort produce such a crop of critical comment and ill-natured inuendo—such a growth of envy and bitterness, and other similar weeds of the human heart—that one might have supposed the hostess, in inviting her friends to be merry and happy, was doing the greatest possible violence to their feelings and inclinations. On the present occasion, perhaps, Ensign Prettyman remarked that he hoped the Collector would give a Plesiosaurian polka, or an Iguanodon quadrille; and it is not improbable Dr. Leechley may have observed that here was another chance for Miss Catharine, if Lovelong would only borrow a little inspiration from "Simkin" instead of Helicon, and screw his courage to the sticking place. Mrs. Major Devigne, too, may have said one or two spiteful things to her husband about the approaching entertainment. But on the whole people seemed mightily interested in Mrs. Flirter's Ball, and vastly delighted at the prospect of it.

When the happy day at length arrived, ladies dispensed with their evening drive, in order to be able to take an early dinner, which would give them ample time to perform the potent mysteries of dress. Fair warriors, how carefully they armed themselves! what danger lurked in flowing satins and etherial muslins! what deadly arrows were ready to dart from wreaths and bouquets! what strength lay in dark tresses, and strategy in auburn ringlets! how slaughterous were the sashes which encircled slender waists! how merciless the shoes of white satin which set off the beauty of tiny feet! Bright-eyed witches, with what magic did they surround a jewelled bracelet upon a delicately rounded arm! what sorcery they practised upon rings, and brooches, and necklaces! what charms and incantations they must have used to render a glove so powerful, a piece of lace capable of exercising such mighty influence upon the mind of man! At nine o'clock, Mr. Flirter's residence was quite a "blaze of light." The approach was illuminated with festoons of lamps suspended from bamboo poles. Inside the house were several glittering chandeliers, and an infinity of wall-shades, besides argand lamps hanging here and there, and shedding radiance like little suns. The windows were thrown open

for the sake of air; the band was conveniently arranged in a verandah; the supper (which had cost Mrs. Flirter more than one anxious day and sleepless night) was laid in an apartment adjoining the ball-room, and was intended to be carefully concealed from view until the time came for practically testing its excellences. Flirter was of course in a fidget; but how could it be otherwise? The necessity of party-giving was, he knew, one of those accidents of his position, which, dislike them as he might, he could not escape from: this he was convinced of, because Mrs. F. had said it over and over again, and she was not in the habit of leading him astray in any unscientific matter. Nevertheless it seemed to him to be a remarkably unpleasant necessity, a particularly unfortunate accident. He could not dance a bit, and had not an atom of taste for music. He felt very uncomfortable in tight trousers and a black coat. The glare of the lights hurt his eyes, and the noise and the heat made his head ache. Late hours he detested, and suppers were his abomination. To bow with *empressement* to a person he did not care for; to smile when there was nothing that particularly pleased him, and to talk when he had literally nothing to say,—were arts far beyond the range of his genius. He therefore felt quite out of his element at a ball, and played the part of Host at such an entertainment with the sort of awkwardness that Keeley might experience, if by any singular chance he were condemned to undertake the character of Romeo.

Time sped on; carriages drew up to the door and drove away again; the room began to fill; gentlemen selected partners, a quadrille was formed; and the music commenced,—to continue, as Flirter plaintively remarked, the whole night through, and not cease till Heaven knew what hour in the morning!

Mrs. Major Devigne with her family arrived rather late, as it is perhaps the wont of fine ladies to do; and when she came in, gloriously arrayed in figured satin, and glittering with jewels, she looked, with her daughters and nieces, like some Queen in a melodrama, attended by her ladies, and of course the spectacle could not fail to excite a general sensation. Almost the first person who came up to greet her was Mr. Sternhold, the Political Agent at Kilgaum, a man whose great talent and sagacity had early marked him out for diplomatic employ, and who enjoyed the reputation of being one of the most able, as well as most cautious and reserved persons in the Company's service. He was tall, and sparely built, with a darkish complexion, and black penetrating eyes; and there was a curious expression of mingled composure and watchfulness in his countenance that seemed to indicate him at once as a safe depository of secrets, and a skilful hand at extracting secrets from others. He was not a man of many words, but always spoke to the purpose, and in a mild, gentlemanly manner. Having been introduced to Miriam and Louise, he asked them how they liked India, whether this was the first party they had been at since they arrived; and a few other common-place questions. He then complimented Betsey and

Fanny on their good looks, as a father might compliment his children, and turned round to say a civil word to poor Miss Meek, who had come to the ball (rather against Mrs. Devigne's wish) at the very particular desire of Mrs. Flirter, and who kept purposely in the background in order not to intercept any of the admiration due to the young ladies, her pupils. Having done this, he bowed respectfully, and passed on. "That is one of the richest men on our side of India," said Mrs. Devigne to Miriam. "He has a first-rate appointment, and a considerable private fortune. With his immense interest, I dare say he'll be Governor, or Governor General, some day. But he always treats Fanny and Betsey as though they were little girls in frocks and trowsers. Isn't it provoking?"

Having leisure to look about them, Miriam and Louise directed their attention to the various persons in the room, and made enquiries of their Aunt relative to some whom they had never seen before. Among the dancers, they discerned Lieut. Lovelong (a fair-haired, languid youth, with a light trace of moustache) and Miss Catherine Flirter, the Laura of his Petrarchian dreams. The little *riante* Mrs. Staples (the Cotton Planter's wife) was dancing with real spirit, with honest Bob Dunrobin, Flirter's First Assistant for a partner.—Bob making the floor shake and creak alarmingly as he tumbled about, forgetting perhaps that he weighed fourteen stone and a half without his hat and boots. Slapdash, the "fast young man" of Major Devigne's regiment, was standing up with a very brown brunette, whom he called Miss Clementina, and upon whom the Major's lady every now and then cast a scornful glance, as much as to say, what is *she* here for? Why should Mrs. Flirter invite dark persons to her parties? Stalking about the room in his fine uniform, and with a self-satisfied smile upon his usually vacant face, was Captain Canter of the Irregular Cavalry. Gliding hither and thither, neat, noiseless, and active, was the well-dressed little Assistant Judge, D'Oyley Dashwood. On a couch opposite, Ensign Prettyman sat talking to a pale young man, the junior Ensign of the corps, about certain "moving accidents by flood and field" that evidently interested the lad greatly. Near them was a stout lady with a pretty daughter, surrounded by several gentlemen, attracted perhaps more by the beauty of the young girl than the wit of her mama, though the latter laughed immensely at her own sayings. "How vulgar!" said Mrs. Devigne. "That person is the wife of Brigadier Oldbuffer, though from the style of her conversation, and the rudeness of her manner, you might fancy she was the landlady of some tavern. How she gets her daughters off, I don't know, yet that sentimental looking little thing in pink is the last of five, all married in this country, and married well too."

The ladies, however, were soon compelled to take a more active part in the festivities of the evening. Captain Granton came up, accompanied by an Artillery officer, and asked Mrs. Devigne to dance, while his friend prevailed on Miss Fanny to follow the ex-

ample of "dear mama." Then came Dr. Leechley, who would take no denial from Miriam; and Captain Cantef and Ensign Prettyman, who offered their arms respectively to Louise and Miss Betsey. As Mrs. Devigne sailed through the figures, with a stately grace she must have thought bewitching, she kept a wary eye upon her two daughters, and glanced every now and then at poor Miss Meek, who had been left sitting by herself on a chair at the far end of the room. Before the dance was half over, what was the fine lady's surprise to see Mr. Sternhold, the Political Agent,—the wealthiest and most eminent man in the room,—the eligible of eligibles,—go up and seat himself beside the governess, and enter into an animated conversation with her! The blood rushed to her face immediately. She had never seen Mr. Sternhold exchange more than half-a-dozen words with Miss Meek, and those the veriest common-places, yet here they were, talking earnestly and confidentially together, like friends of ten years standing, or persons approaching a still more intimate relationship. What *could* it be all about? Surely Mr. Sternhold, with his fortune, his high connexions, his brilliant prospects, could never contemplate throwing himself at the feet of such a creature as that! True, he was an eccentric man, and incomprehensible in many things, but it was impossible to suppose that having passed by Fanny, and even Betsey, with indifference, he could be thinking of an alliance with their governess. Really, utterly impossible. Perhaps he might have altered his mind about the girls, and be asking Miss Meek a few questions concerning one of them, with a view to an early proposal. If that *were* so, what a triumph! The whole Station would envy her. The Judge's wife would die of vexation, and even good little Mrs. Flirter would be jealous. But she could have wished Mr. Sternhold had taken an opportunity of speaking to *her* instead of addressing himself, in that odd way, to the governess. These thoughts were still passing through her mind, when the colloquy ended, and she saw Mr. Sternhold get up and join Major Devigne, and walk arm-in arm with him out of the room, and up and down the verandah. More singular still! How she wished the dance was over! She would willingly give the costliest jewel on her person to be able to fathom the mystery.

In course of time the music ceased, and the gentlemen led their partners to the seats ranged on either side of the room. Mrs. Devigne flew to Miss Meek.

"What has he been saying to you?"

"Who, ma'am?"

"Why Mr. Sternhold, to be sure, didn't I see him speaking to you for ten minutes at least during the last quadrille?"

"Oh, he said nothing particular, ma'am."

"Now come, Miss Meek, you cannot deceive *me*. I am accustomed to things of this sort, and when I find a gentleman of Mr. Sternhold's position and standing going out of his way to talk for quarter of an hour to a young lady like yourself, I am sure there *must* be something particular, very particular indeed. If it's a secret between Mr. Sternhold and your-

self, then of course I don't want to hear anything about it, unless a natural feeling of friendship and gratitude should prompt you to tell me ; but if it concerns me or mine in any way, then I really consider it my bounden duty to insist upon a full disclosure, however unpleasant it may be to you."

"Mr. Sternhold, ma'am, was merely chatting with me for five minutes, and making a few enquiries about ——"

"About Betsey, was it? Why do you hesitate?"

"No, ma'am," he was asking chiefly about Miss Miriam; and really, you must allow me to assure you, most solemnly, that he said nothing particular."

Mrs. Devigne bit her proud lips with vexation ; but recovering herself instantly, she put on a smile to conceal her annoyance.

"Ah, you foolish girl!" cried she, "why did you not say as much at first? Of course Mr. Sternhold could only ask the most correct and proper questions regarding my nieces. But I fancied at first he might be smitten with Betsey—who is looking more beautiful to-night than I have ever seen her, and imagine you were her *confidante*, and that it would be advantageous to interest you in his favour."

The Ball went on gaily, and people seemed wonderfully to enjoy themselves. Captain Granton danced twice or thrice with Miriam; and, probably without intending it, made quite an impression on her by his easy bearing, his winning manner, and amusing conversation. Nor was he wanting in attention to Louise, who, like her sister, could not refrain from thinking him the most agreeable man in the room. To Mrs. Devigne he spoke with a respectful deference which gave that lady secret pleasure ; and and as she happened to know his circumstances almost as well as he did himself, he did not run the risk, which more fortunate individuals sometimes incurred, of losing ground in her esteem by exhibiting indifference to the attractions of her daughters. "He has nothing to live on but his pay," she would say to herself, "and half *that* goes every month to his creditors ; so the girls must not think of *him* though ; were he free from incumbrances, he would make by no means a bad husband."

About midnight, there was a movement in the room, the Band struck up "The Roast Beef of Old England," and people were seen to "pair off," and proceed slowly to the apartment where the supper was spread. Miriam was exchanging a few words with Catharine Flirter (who had danced herself red-hot, and was making ineffectual efforts to cool her face with a China fan) when, to her surprise, Mr. Sternhold walked quietly up, offered her his arm, and led her away to supper.

"I hope you have spent a pleasant evening, Miss Devigne," he said. "Unhappily I don't dance, or I should have been proud to have had you as my partner. I have had, besides, business to attend to this evening, which has prevented me from having the pleasure of improving our acquaintance. Probably you did not miss me?"

"Oh, yes!" replied Miriam, "I wondered, once or twice, where you had gone to, and feared you

might be unwell, and have left early on that account."

"There was a despatch," said Sternhold, "from my Assistant on the Frontier, and I was compelled to answer it immediately, and also to write emergently to the Brigadier at Kilgaum."

"Is it anything of importance? No war, I hope?" asked Miriam, anxiously.

"Say nothing to any body here," returned Sternhold, with a smile, "you will know all to-morrow."

He uttered these words in an under tone, as they took their seats at the supper-table. Nothing further passed on the subject; and Mr. Sternhold, finding Mrs. Devigne on one side of him, and Mrs. Oldbuffer and her daughter opposite, extended his civilities, so as to preclude the idea that there was anything "particular" in his attentions to Miriam.

Mrs. Oldbuffer, being blessed with a potent appetite, disposed of the wing and breast of a fowl, a *pâté* or two, a heap of jelly and *blanc manger*, and a large slice of pine-apple,—facilitating the descent of these heterogeneous refreshments with two glasses and a half of champagne and a bottle of soda-water.

Then she paused, and said to the Political Agent, "What is the news, sir, from the frontier? Are we to take the field? Ah la! I shall be so anxious about the Brigadier; for he is not so active as he used to be, you know now. *Is* there any danger? You'll tell *me*, Mr. Sternhold, I'm sure."

"When do you return to Kilgaum, ma'am?" asked Sternhold.

"Not for three or four days yet."

"You need not alarm yourself, I assure you."

"I do detest war," said Mrs. Oldbuffer to Mrs. Devigne; "it makes one so nervous and miserable. I'm always afraid the Brigadier will be wounded again, or fall from his horse in a *mêlée* (I think that's that they call it.) He can't mount now, without assistance, and if he were to tumble off on the field of battle, he is so stout that he'd have no chance with the enemy."

After supper there was more dancing; and at a certain hour in the morning—whether two or three, or four, Mr. Flirter could not distinctly say, for he had forgotten to wind up his watch, which had consequently run down,—the evening's entertainment was brought to a close by a country dance, which was gone through with great spirit and animation. There was then a general move homewards,—the only exception being in the person of Lieut. Slapdash, who having taken "the merest trifle" too much champagne, was found, about six A. M., by Buxoo the hamaul, fast asleep on a couch in the Verandah, dreaming of driving a four-in-hand to Kilgaum, containing all the people of the station of Dust-i-nuggur.

(To be Continued.)

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